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(see p 137)

IRISH CHURCHES
AND
MONASTIC BUILDINGS

I
THE FIRST PHASES
AND THE ROMANESQUE

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PREFACE

Over forty years have passed since the appearance of a book devoted entirely to the early and medieval ecclesiastical architecture of Ireland: the fine volume by Mr. A. C. Champneys. It is a large book, long out of print, difficult and expensive to obtain. To the monumental works of Dr. George Petrie and Lord Dunraven the same remarks apply with still greater force. Moreover, both deal only with the first phases of Irish building and do not discuss or illustrate any work of a date later than the close of the twelfth century.

For these reasons the production of a new book on the subject seems to the writer to be justified. In its preparation the first intention was to present, in a single volume, a study, both general and detailed, of all Irish ecclesiastical building from the earliest times up to the Dissolution of the monasteries in the sixteenth century. As the work advanced, however, it became clear to me that a single-volume work could only be achieved by a very summary treatment of some important phases of Irish architecture, and in particular of the native Romanesque. Adequate discussion and illustration of the buildings of all periods would make the book unwieldy. Division into two parts has, therefore, been decided on and this first volume of the pair has been given a lesser scope, chronologically, with the special object of giving to the Irish Romanesque—the most individual product of the native architectural genius—the space it deserves.

The Irish style is followed in these pages beyond its highest development to its last stages and, since these manifestations are datable to a time later, by several decades, than the first appearance in Ireland of the advancing Gothic style, it follows that the adoption of a fixed chronological limit (*c.* 1180 or 1200 A.D.) without regard to stylistic considerations, would have a certain disadvantage. Such a limit would necessitate the inclusion of the earlier archi-

P R E F A C E

ture of the Cistercians in particular. Less native in its inspiration, this phase is the logical and appropriate introduction, from both the historical and stylistic viewpoints, to the consideration of Irish Gothic architecture. It is, therefore, reserved to take first place in a second volume (in preparation) which will be devoted to the churches and abbeys of medieval Ireland.

The Round Towers, phenomena of Irish building in particular and the subject of much speculation and pointless writing, do not find a place in the following pages except where similar features are embodied in or attached to churches, or have doorway or window details comparable to those in the less lofty buildings. The mere description of the construction, dimensions and features of the surviving towers—there were about a hundred of them in the country at one time—would take up more space than can be spared in this objective study of Irish church architecture. Here it must suffice to say that many of these slender belfries, which served also as watch towers, refuges and treasure houses, have the proportions and grace of the Classic column, and were erected in the ninth, tenth centuries and even so late as the Romanesque twelfth. The earliest of them belong to the periods of the invasions of the Northmen; they “represent an architecture not crushed but stimulated by these very inroads.”¹

In the illustration of this volume more use has been made of the pen than of the camera. Necessary as is the photograph—indispensable in many cases—it is not always fully informative—in its small details of interest are sometimes lost or obscured or perhaps are so weather-worn as not to register satisfactorily on the sensitive emulsion. These details the pen can supply, along with the plans, sections and the like which are so necessary to full understanding. If the absence of the often-repeated view of Gallarus Oratory, for instance, be deplored by the reader he is asked to consider the drawings of it instead—they give more factual, accurate information.

1. Baldwin Brown: “The Ancient Architecture of Ireland,” *The Builder* (1897).

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Based, in the main, upon nearly half a century's interest in ancient and medieval buildings in Ireland—and on experience gained in the official charge of National Monuments during about half that time—this volume owes much to earlier writers on the subject: to the authors of books, and of articles in the journals of archæological societies.

Chief among the books are *The Ecclesiastical Architecture of Ireland*, by Dr. George Petrie, and the *Notes on Irish Architecture* of Lord Dunraven. Petrie's famous essay is the first work on the subject which can be considered to be scientific in character and the splendid photographs in Dunraven's two massive volumes are particularly valuable in that they show many of the buildings before any restorative works (sometimes obliterating valuable evidence) were carried out. Both these writers confined their researches to works not later in date than the end of the twelfth century. It is otherwise with a third important book: Mr. A. C. Champneys' *Ecclesiastical Architecture of Ireland*. In this single volume the author deals with the whole range of Irish church architecture and ecclesiastical art from early Christian times to the Dissolution of the monasteries, which is also the planned scope of the two parts of this book. Mr. Champneys' volume is of great value. I have also made some use of Professor Baldwin Browne's papers on early Irish architecture in *The Builder* (1897) which are valuable contributions to the literature of the subject. To Docteur François Henry's *La Sculpture Irlandaise*, in which much space and many illustrations are devoted to the native Romanesque, I owe a considerable debt here gratefully acknowledged.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I am also very grateful to Dr. E. T. Rae, of the University of Illinois, for his generously accorded permission to make use of his as yet unpublished thesis on medieval architecture in Ireland. Dr. Rae came to his study of Irish church architecture with a fresh and unbiassed mind and his work is therefore particularly valuable. My debt to it will become more obvious in the second volume of this book already in preparation.

Among other works consulted and used are the monographs on Cormac's Chapel, Cashel, and the churches at Kilmalkedar and Ardferf published many years ago by Mr. Arthur Hill. They are amongst the regrettably few studies of Irish buildings made by an architect.

Full use has been made of the many papers by such devoted workers as T. J. Westropp, W. F. Wakeman, H. S. Crawford, P. J. Lynch and others, which have appeared from time to time in the journals of the Irish antiquarian societies, especially in the *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy* and the *Journal of the Royal Society of the Antiquaries of Ireland*. The drawings by that prince of draughtsmen, G. V. Du Noyer, which are in the collections of the two societies mentioned, have also provided material.

I am specially indebted to the Commissioners of Public Works for the permission given to make use of the archives of the National Monuments Branch of the department which they direct. It is, perhaps, superfluous to add that my years of service in the same branch afforded me unique opportunities for the study of ancient structures of all kinds.

To the Inspector of National Monuments, Mr. W. P. Le Clerc, I owe much for his unstinted co-operation.

My thanks for the loan of blocks are due to the Councils of the Royal Society of the Antiquaries of Ireland (for Pl. XX and Ills. Nos. 56, 59, 60, 61, 71, 72, 73, 74, 75, 76, 77, 82 and 100) and of the Royal Irish Academy (for Ills. Nos. 36 and 38). Among individuals I have to thank those who have kindly allowed me to make use of their photographs: Professor S. P. Ó Ríordáin (for Pls. XIII and XIV and Mr. Thomas Mason (for Pls. II, IIIa, VI, XV, XVI,

A C K N O W L E D G M E N T S

XVII, XVIIIa and XIX), Messrs. Duffner Bros. (for Plates VIIIa and b) and the Rev. F. Browne, S.J., whose photograph of the round window at Rahan made possible the revised drawing No. 84. I am also greatly obliged to Mr. D. M. Waterman of the Ancient Monuments Branch of the Ministry of Finance of Northern Ireland for information about Saint Molaise's "House," Devenish, and to my friend and one-time colleague, Mr. G. O hIceadha, for the assistance given in the preparation of the illustrations Nos. 39, 68 and 95.

C O R R I G E N D A

Page 35. Line 30. For "4 inches apart" read "8 inches apart."

Page 41. Notes should be:

1. Ann. Ulster: I, p. 302.
2. *Ibid.* I, p. 289.
3. Ann. Four Masters: I, p. 413.
4. Ann. Ulster: I, p. 440.

Page 76. Line 6. For "thirteenth" read "eighth."

Page 168. Notes. For "9" read "8 bis," for "10" read "9" and so on, reading each reference number down to "18" as one number smaller. After present "18" (which should be 17) insert "18 bis." In new reference 11 for "page 138" read "page 158."

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To
HENRY GODFREY TEMPEST
*who encouraged me to undertake
this book, and patiently waited
for its completion*

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Chapter I

THE ANTIQUITY OF IRISH CHURCH BUILDING

THE small oratories and churches erected in the early centuries of Christianity in Ireland are architecturally humble but they have a special interest: they were evolved—unlike those of western Europe in the same period—in almost entire independence of Roman traditions of building. The isolation of the country, at times actual, was never for long so complete, however, as to exclude the transmission of the building technique or features of the older architecture—the use of mortar and the knowledge of the round arch, for instance, must have come to Ireland from the Continent—but the native building tradition had its roots in the megaliths and in the technique of simple timber construction. The surviving buildings represent the continuous evolution of a native architecture which was to develop, in the twelfth century, into an individual variant of the Romanesque style.

The precise dating of any work of primitive building is difficult and often impossible. This is particularly true of Irish buildings and, as will appear in the discussion of them later in these pages, anything but approximation is difficult. If the date of the introduction of the use of mortar were known the task might be made easier, but of this important matter nothing is certainly known. The question is further complicated by the well-authenticated tradition that timber was the material normally used for several centuries by the Irish in church building, as might be expected in a forested country. It is not surprising that writers have differed

widely on the subject of dating. Petrie, the first to make scientific enquiry (over a hundred years ago¹) had little doubt that the buildings he described belonged, in some instances, to the times of the recorded, saintly founders: the fifth, sixth or seventh centuries; Champneys in his fine volume² expressed the view that few Irish buildings in stone and mortar, could be earlier than the tenth or eleventh centuries. It seems certain that the great Irish student considerably antedated many structures (indeed, in later years he modified his views) and that the English writer erred somewhat in the opposite direction. The Irish churchmen must have become acquainted, through their contacts with the Continent, particularly in the seventh century, with buildings in stone and mortar. They cannot have been so little interested as not to desire to introduce the more permanent building method into their native land, and it is unlikely that this introduction can have been delayed by so many centuries as we have often been asked to believe. The assumption made in this study of the subject is that building in mortar, for Ireland, may be hypothecated for perhaps the seventh century but certainly in the succeeding hundred years.

If the assumption does not help greatly in the definitive dating of any particular building there can be little doubt that events subsequent to the eighth century: the destructive raids and burnings of the Northmen—the Vikings—in the ninth and tenth centuries, must have given a vigorous impetus to stone building at that period. None the less, in the exposed western districts, where stone was plentiful and timber scarce, building in the former material must have greater antiquity.

In the pages which follow, each stage of architectural development, from that of the simple church with massive looking masonry but devoid of ornament, obviously early, to the full flowering of the Irish Romanesque in the twelfth century, is considered in its turn and for each stage datings are attempted. The dates assigned to the early stages are necessarily approximations—and matters of opinion—which become closer as the later stages are reached.

For much of what we know of the early history of Ireland we are dependent upon the hagiographers in some degree and to a much greater extent upon the annalists—the compilers of the Annals of Ulster and the celebrated Four Masters in particular. But it must be said here that they give very little help in the solution of building dates. They record happenings; the deaths of kings, princes and holy men; catastrophes, battles, raids and burnings and the like, such as would make newspaper headlines to-day. It is seldom that they note the erection of churches and, even when they do so, the reference is more often oblique than direct. The regrettably few references from which the date of an extant building can be inferred or which can be regarded as definitive will be given later in their proper places.

1. Petrie, *The Ecclesiastical Architecture of Ireland*, 2nd ed. Dublin, 1845.
2. Champneys, *Irish Ecclesiastical Architecture*. London, 1910.

Chapter II

THE FIRST CHURCHES

NO trace remains of any pre-Patrician church building nor, indeed, can we assign any structure extant to the times of the national apostle. But a number of literary references of early date indicate that the church and other buildings of the first centuries of Christianity in Ireland were built mainly of wood. This building custom of the Irish—then called the Scots—was known to writers in Britain of the seventh and eighth centuries, the Venerable Bede for one, as the *more Scottorum*. Thus Bede records¹ that when St. Finan of Iona, ordained and sent by the “Scots,” became Bishop of Lindisfarne in the mid-seventh century, he built for his see, not a stone church, but one entirely of sawn wood after the Scotie (i.e., Irish) manner, covered with reeds. A later bishop, Eadbert (*ob.* 698) took off the thatch from this building and covered both its roof and walls with plates of lead.²

Not only was timber plentiful, since the country was well wooded, but it is only to be expected that a missionary church would adopt the materials nearest to hand and those, moreover, generally used by the people of the land for their own buildings³: timber for posts and the like, the pliable willow and hazel, etc., for weaving the panels of the walls and roof structure; clay to cover the wickerwork; straw, reeds or shingles for the roof covering. Were no other evidence available as to the perishable character of much Irish building, up to times as late, at least, as the tenth century, the very frequent records in the various annals of the total burnings

of monastic settlements, indicate the general use of inflammable materials: easily destroyed, easily replaced.

Well known to Irish scribes were the small cells called, variously *dairtheach*, *deartheach*, *dertech*, *duirtheach*, etc. (Mod. Irish: *dairtheach*—oak houses). They are often mentioned⁴ from the eighth century onwards but probably have a much greater antiquity. Moreover, in an ancient Tract of the Brehon Laws⁵—or rather a thirteenth century commentary thereon—there is a lengthy, curious, and not easily interpreted entry relative to the stipends of and payments to the chief artificer: the *ollamh saer*, of either *Damhliag* (stone church) or *Durthech*, as well as other buildings of less importance. This distinguishes between the two kinds of structure; the latter being definitely of timber. Though datable, on linguistic grounds, to the thirteenth century, the Tract evidently refers to earlier practice. The latest annalistic reference to the word *deartheach* is in the twelfth century.

Even more interesting is the picturesque story from the Book of Moling,⁶ the sixth century founder of the monastery now known as St. Mullins, in Carlow. The story is about the payment to be made by the saint to the great artificer, the Goban Saor, for the building of his "brown" oratory which, incidentally, was roofed with shingles of yew wood. At his wife's instigation the Goban demanded as his fee the full of the *Duirteach* in rye grain, whereupon the saint bid him invert the structure. "So the Goban applied machinery and force to the oratory so that he turned it upside down and not a plank went out of its place and not a joint gave the smallest way beyond the other." Fanciful as much of this tale may seem its circumstantial detail suggests strongly that the oratory was a cunningly framed structure of timber. In 891 the Annals of Ulster record a great wind on St. Martin's Day, which carried the *duirtheachs* from their places; another indication of the nature of these structures. The usual dimensions for a *duirtheach* appear to have been small: 15 feet in length by 10 in breadth.⁷ But the name was applied not only to small structures: witness the "great" *duirtheach* of Rahan, which, the story tells,⁸ was a "jointed

edifice " requiring 1,000 boards. Many persons—260—were burnt in a wooden church, a duirtheach, at Trevet, Meath, says another entry in the Annals of Ulster.⁹ This can have been no mere oratory. The well-known and often quoted description of the great church of St. Brigid at Kildare, by the eighth century monk whose nom-de-plume is Cogitosus,¹⁰ suggests that this building was, in all probability, of timber construction. Not only was it divided into three parts by wooden screens or partitions, its " menacing height " and, above all, its many windows—in contrast to the few and small windows of the extant churches of stone, which windows, moreover, could be more easily provided in timber walls than in those of stone—reinforce the assumption that the church was of wood.

While timber was used for the main structure of churches—the posts of the walls and the beams and rafters of the roof—the frequent mention in hagiographical literature and annals of " rods " (presumably of pliable willow and the like) shows that these were used to fill the panels of the framework. The final work would be to coat the wickerwork so formed with clay, within and without, producing thus the well-known " wattle-and-daub " construction. To St. Ciaran of Seir a boar brought the necessary wattles and rods for his church¹¹; Kevin at Glendalough built himself a little oratory of rods¹²; St. Brigid's cell at Kildare required a hundred horse-loads of peeled rods.¹³ These three references seem to be to huts, most probably round in plan; the humblest form of dwelling in ancient Ireland. The attractive story of the seventh century St. Baoithin watching the weaving of the walls of a house is well known:

" Of rods the house is built
It is a single rod which the man cuts;
And which he weaves upon his house.
The house rises pleasantly,
Tho' singly he sets the rod."¹⁴

O Curry also describes¹⁵ a round house with a central pole from which rafters descend to the top of the wall of posts and wickerwork, but does not cite his MS. authority. Without a more or less centrally placed post support, the outward thrust exerted by the

rafters upon the tops of the wall-posts, though not of great magnitude, would operate continuously to spread the walls. In the absence of such a support, ties at the eave level would be necessary. We have no evidence, however, that this expedient was adopted in early Irish building though the necessity for it, between the gun-wales, in the structure of a coracle of wickerwork, for instance, must have been recognized at an early date and put into practice and it may well have been adopted also in building technique.

In the preface to O Curry's book is a woodcut of a group of some Gaulish round huts of wickerwork as depicted on the Antonine Column at Rome. These have roofs of rounded, domical, external form, a circumstance perhaps merely of artist's licence (a Roman sculptor might well consider a dome to be the proper finish for a round building) or because the roof structure of these huts of Gaul was actually of wickerwork formed to a saucer shape, inverted.

Some, at least, of the larger Irish houses may also have been circular; the description of the elaborate house of Bricriu¹⁶ rather suggests this, but there are not lacking references to "long houses." The house of Crede was obviously one such: "one hundred feet are in Crede's house, from the one gable to the other, and twenty feet in measure are there in its noble door."¹⁷

Though never so long as Crede's house the type of all Irish churches, from the earliest times until the coming of the great monastic orders, is the rectangular building, gabled at both ends and small in size. Neither the centralized plan nor the round eastern termination—the apse—ever found favour in Ireland. While the basic form and constructional type of the earliest church buildings may be inferred from the quoted literary references, little emerges therefrom about structural and ornamental details. But there are observable in later works of building and sculpture certain suggestive survivals or translations which will receive attention later in these pages.

But not all of Ireland was rich in timber. In ancient times—as at present—the wind-swept western coast lands cannot have supported forest or even usable woods. Indeed, some areas at a

distance from the coast seem to have lacked timber sufficient and suitable for building: St. Patrick was forced to use moist earth for the building of a church somewhere in Tyrawley.¹⁸

1. Bede: Hist. Eccl. (Edn. London, 1847), lib. iii, c.25.
2. *ibid.*
3. The House of Bricriu: *Irish Texts Society*, vol. ii. O Curry: "Manners and Customs of Ancient Irish" has many references.
4. Ann. Tig: 747, "the duirtheach more of Rathain Ua Suanaigh" (Rahan, Offaly).
Ann. F.M.: "a new derthach burned. *Ibid.*: 804, "people killed in the derthach of Aedan" . . . 812, "the derthach of Fore burned." 890, "the Northmen of Dublin broke the derthach of Armagh." 905, the burning of the dertech of Mayo. 1075, a similar happening at Clonard.
5. T.C.D. MSS. H, 2, 16, and the Book of Ballymote. Quoted and translated in Petrie: *The Ecclesiastical Architecture of Ireland*, pp. 346-7.
6. Quoted by O Curry, *ibid.* iii, pp. 35-6.
7. T.C.D. MSS. H. 3, 17, p. 653.
8. Ann. Tig.: 747.
9. A.U. 849.
10. Colgan: *Trias Thaumaturga*, p. 523.
11. Macalister: *Archæology of Ireland*, p. 340, gives the references; O'Grady, *Silva Gadelica*, i, p. 3.
12. *Acta Sanctorum*, June, vol. i, p. 326.
13. *Lismore Lives of Saints*, line 1570.
14. O Curry: *ibid.*, iii, p. 33.
15. O Curry: *ibid.*, iii, p. 31.
16. O Curry: *ibid.*, iii, 17 ff. *Irish Texts Society*, vol. ii, pp. 3-5.
17. O Curry: *ibid.*, iii, pp. 13-14.
18. Tirechan: Life of St. Patrick in Book of Armagh, vii, fol. 14, b2.

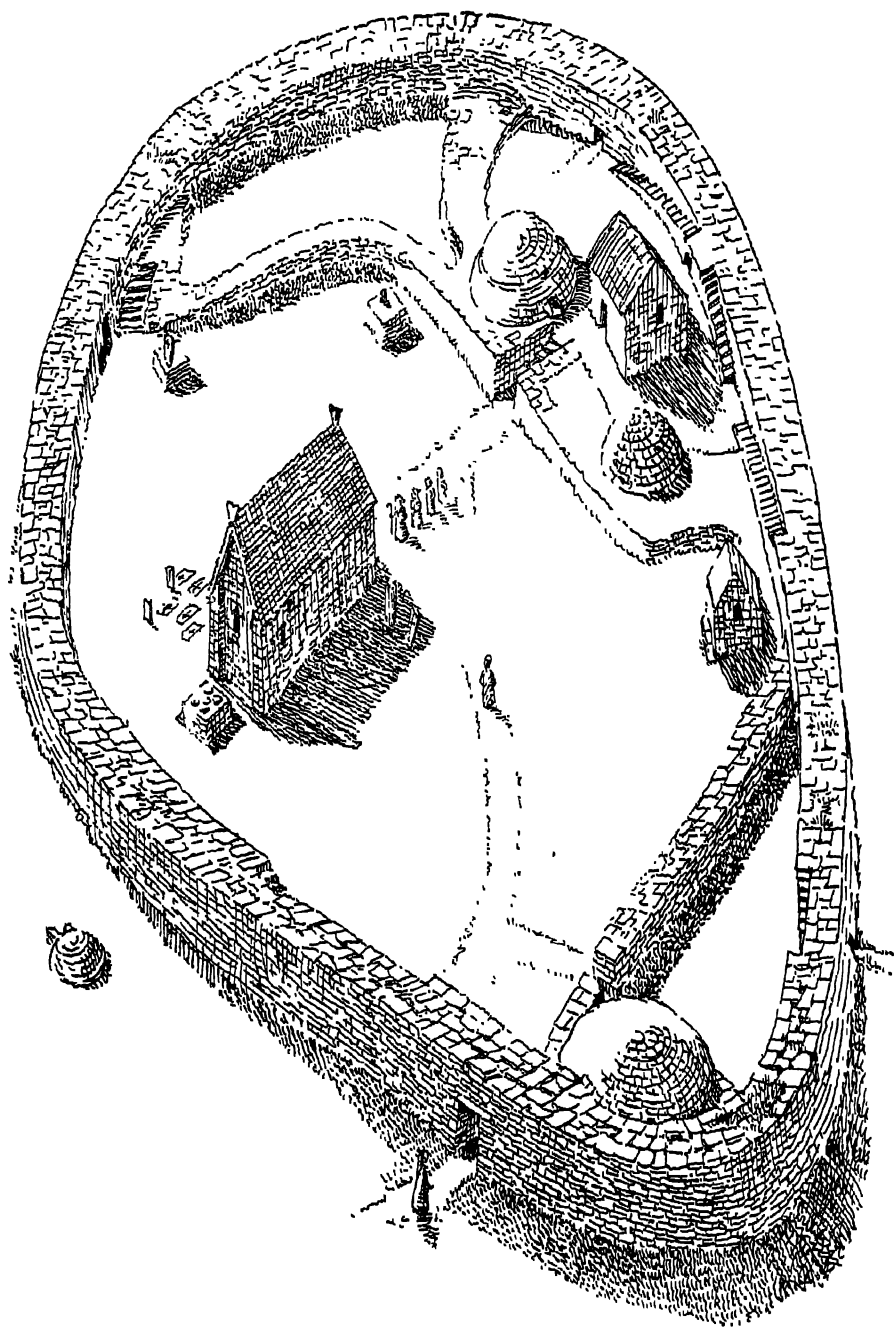
Chapter III

EARLY MONASTERIES

THE Irish church, a missionary one in its first objectives, speedily developed monastic centres not only evangelistic but also educational in purpose. From these settlements went forth those indefatigable missionaries, teachers and scribes, to Britain and the continent of Europe who are still remembered in places remote from the homeland. Again, to the celebrated monastic schools of Ireland, there came students from many parts of Europe in later times.

The monastic centres of the early Irish church were very similar to those of the earliest monastic societies of Syria and Egypt. That is to say, associations of monks, each dwelling under self-imposed discipline in his separate cell, grouped with others about one or more churches: the complex called a *laura*. The more austere among Irish holy men sought even greater isolation as hermits, and built their cells and oratories in relatively inaccessible and often inhospitable places: islands in sea or lake, headlands, even hilltops, remote valleys, "deserts" (dyserts) in the marginal lands. A constant feature of these early hermitages and monasteries, small or large, was its enclosure—an encircling rampart of earth or stone. This was as necessary to a monastery as to a farmhouse of the times, and for the hermit it served, in addition, to shut out all but the heavens from his sight and thoughts.

In hagiographical literature there are numerous references to the gift of cashels, forts or duns, outright, to the church by newly

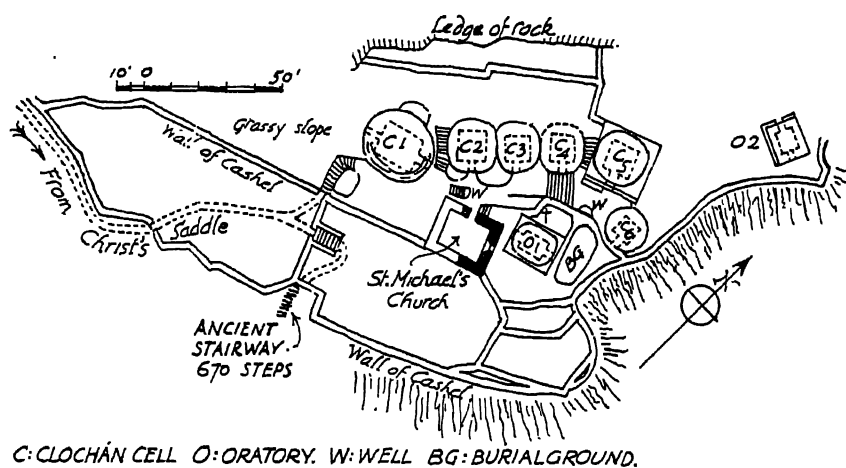


1. Inishmurray, Sligo Monastic Cashel

converted chiefs. To Patrick himself several such gifts were made: at Armagh and at Donaghpatrick and Trim in Meath; St. Caillin received from the chief of Breffni his cathair at Fenagh in Leitrim, and to St. Benen the fortress of Dun Lughaid (now Kilbennan, Galway) was given by its lord on the occasion of his baptism. Though such gifts were made even as late as the eleventh century it does not follow that every monastic cashel was a chief's fortress in the first instance: most of them must have been monkish erections—necessary defining and protective bounds to the establishment. Few of these enclosures, or traces of them, remain to-day. There are fragments of heavy walls around St. Mac Duagh's church on the main island of Aran, Galway, and some on islands more remote, and at Glendalough, Wicklow, the impressive gateway is evidence of the existence there, in ancient times, of a rampart around the monastic "city." Some of the great earthen banks of the large site at Seir Kieran (Clareen) Offaly, still stand but the enclosures of such famous monasteries as those at Armagh, Clonard, Durrow, Bangor and Clonmacnoise have vanished. At Inchcleraun, Lough Ree, there are small traces and the position of a gateway, which had stonework of twelfth century date, has been defined.

The most complete monastic cashel remaining is that on Innismurray, an island off the Sligo coast. The illustration (1) is a paper restoration based on the remarkably complete existing remains and is conjectural in only a few respects. (It is incomplete, however, in that the number of dwelling huts must have been greater; clear evidences of these having vanished, a conjectural restoration of them was felt to be undesirable). The unmortared walls, from seven to fifteen feet in thickness at the base and slightly battered, enclose a space broadly egg-shaped and measuring, internally, about 175 feet in length and 135 feet in breadth. The maximum elevation of the walls to-day is about 13 feet; probably not much less than the original height. In several places internal flights of steps gave access to the wall-tops. There are several entrances, the largest near to the narrow, northern end of the cashel; others, curiously low and stepping downwards to low openings in the outer faces of the walls.

The principal interest of the Innismurray cashel is the group of buildings within it. There is a clochán (now known as the Schoolhouse), a small, stone-roofed oratory (St. Molaise's House), a larger church of plain construction and the principal church, a structure with antae at the east end. There are internal enclosures. One, which is near the main entrance, has within it a small clochán built against the rampart; in another are the large clochán and the plain church, and the third may have been a garden. To obtain a mental bird's-eye view of an Irish monastery of small size as it might have appeared in the seventh or eighth centuries, it is only necessary to picture to ourselves a few more dwelling huts and buildings for community use—a refectory, a kitchen, for instance—in the largest open space in which, also, crosses and other memorials must be imagined.



2. Skellig Michael, Kerry Plan of monastery

The action of the sea has swept away part of the monastic enclosing wall at Illauntannig (Maharees Islands), Kerry, but the remaining wall, a horseshoe arc in plan, around the dry-built cells and oratory there, though lower than that of Inishmurray, is equally massive. Walling also survives (2) at the high-perched monastery of Skellig Michael, of which more hereafter. In view of

the Skellig, on the sunny slope of a mainland glen, are the remains of a small monastery: KILLABUONIA. A hundred years ago at least nine stone huts clustered around the small oratory. This is now a heap of stones and but three of the clocháns remain. Though no certainly ancient enclosure survives at Killabuonia, the site is interesting because it is reminiscent of the island monastery in being terraced on the hillside, with stone revetments to each step. A cross-inscribed pillar stone and a gable-ended monument, known as the Priest's Grave, also stand upon the site.¹

The remains of clocháns at DUVILLAUN, a Mayo islet, are outside the small monastic cashel which contains a small oratory. The enclosing bank of stone and earth is a slighter affair than the walls of Inishmurray and Illauntannig but the enclosure is interesting in that it is divided into two parts by an internal wall. In the eastern and smaller section is the oratory and that to the west may have acted as the congregational space of an open air church.²

The famous missionary saints went forth from monasteries like these; within these crude and now ruined enclosures, and others like them which have vanished, religion and learning flourished and scribes and illuminators worked to the greater glory of God.

1. Lynch: *J.R.S.A.I.*, vol. 32, pp. 56-9.

2. Henry: *Irish Art*, London (1940), pp. 24-5.

Chapter IV

CHURCHES AND ORATORIES OF UNMORTARED STONE

FROM distant Tory southwards to Inishmurray in Sligo Bay, thence by the coasts of Mayo and Galway to "Aran of the Saints," onwards to Skellig Michael and the south-western peninsulas, there are few habitable islands or suitable coastland sites which do not preserve some relic: some oratory or church, memorial cross or primitive dwelling. These exposed and treeless coast lands of Ireland, remote from the woodlands of the interior, could not well nourish an architecture of timber such as prevailed in early times in the country at large. But if timber was absent from these places stone was abundant, and the craft of the cashel and souterrain builders still persisted in an environment so suitable to its survival. From these circumstances arose a primitive architecture of stone, contemporaneous, moreover, with that of timber in the richer lands, and one which was possibly affected by the forms of timber buildings, in some degree. The round shape of the minor huts of posts and rods, with the necessary adjustments to suit the different material, may well have been the model for the beehive hut of stone now to be considered. That construction in timber also affected later forms of dry and mortared building in stone will be argued in another chapter.

Survivors of this stone architecture of early Christian times are the beehive huts or clocháns and the small oratories which derive from them. Both are built upon the corbel principle, a structural method of great antiquity first practised in Ireland, so far as we

can judge, by the Bronze Age builders of the great passage-graves of Newgrange, Dowth, Sliabh-na-Calliagh and the like. For the present purpose corbels may be defined, briefly, as stones laid projecting beyond their supports to carry loads from beams or other corbels above them. A corbel vault is formed of a succession of stone courses corbelled inwards from all sides of the building until they meet at the centre. The method, by no means exclusively Irish, is a natural and obvious expedient for covering in spaces of moderate dimensions—one which would suggest itself to and be adopted by primitive builders if reasonably flat and sufficiently large stones were available to them.

The classic example, that most highly developed and structurally accomplished, is the *tholos* tomb at Mycenae, in Greece, commonly called the Tomb of Agamemnon or Treasury of Athens. It is of large size and constructed of wrought stone. Doubtless it had many forerunners; it certainly had successors. Though a connection has not been proved between the *tholoi* of the eastern Mediterranean and the corbel-built huts of southern Italy, the Adriatic coasts, France, Spain and Portugal, where they are fairly numerous in treeless and stony areas¹, it is tempting to trace the Irish clocháns to the same ultimate origin by way of the western Mediterranean.

Many of the clocháns are now in a ruinous state but some complete specimens survive in the coastal areas extending from Inishmurray to the Dingle peninsula, and the Skelligs, where is the most remarkable concentration. In the typical clochán the corbel principle is well applied; in fact, the structure is composed entirely of corbelling from foundation to closing stone. Each course of stonework, laid without mortar and nearly horizontally, overhangs by a little the course below. As it rises the building gradually narrows until its apex can be closed by a single slab and the "dome" then be finished by more stones to secure the "closer" in position and complete the beehive outline. All the courses slope outwards slightly to direct the rain away from the interior. The normal clochán is circular or nearly so in plan—roughly oval—

and develops towards the oblong with rounded corners and the rectangular internal plan.

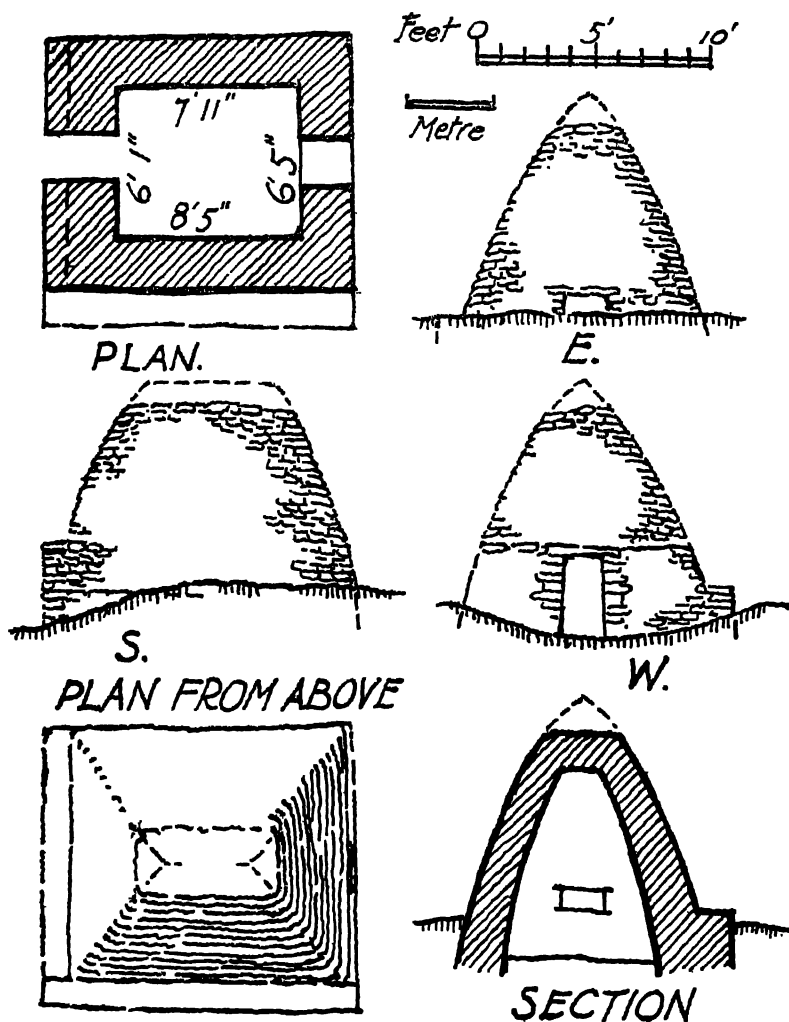
A vault of corbels exerts no outward thrust; its tendency is rather to inward collapse. But in a small, circular building of corbel construction an inward movement serves but to wedge and tighten the inner ends of the stones: each course is, in effect, a completely circular arch lying in a horizontal plane (7). When the fully rectangular plan was adopted this inward wedging no longer operated: at the critical points the joints of the stonework in the longer sides of the structure tended to open rather than to close. The tendency appears even in the very perfectly constructed oratory of Gallarus, to be described later in this chapter, and its implications for the development of the Irish stone roof are discussed in the chapter following.

Europe has more than one St. Michael's Rock but surely none more romantic in position and silhouette than Skellig Michael, seven miles out from the rocky coast of Kerry. There, on shelves or terraces at over five hundred feet above the waters of the Atlantic, and originally approached by a vertiginous flight of more than six hundred steps, are the cells and oratories of a primitive monastery: "the most western of Christ's fortresses in the ancient world." With the exception of that at Inishmurray no other Irish settlement of the kind presents so perfect a picture of the eremitical monastic plan, resembling the *laura* of the eastern Mediterranean. It owes its survival to its sea-girt, remote position, its sanctity and the fact that only stone is used in the construction of its buildings. These are nine in number: two oratories, six dwelling huts and the tiny church of St. Michael. All, excepting the last, which is built in mortar, are clocháns of dry stone, in this case evenly bedded flags of the Old Red Sandstone formations.

The Skellig huts show an advance upon the simplicity of the typical clochán as described: five of the six, while nearly circular in plan externally, have interiors approximately square in plan at the floor level. The base of the sixth, No. 5 on the Plan (2), is square, but the greater part of its height is beehive-like, just as the

others. Some of the square interiors have rounded corners which, in these and the other clocháns, become more rounded as the building rises through the first three or four feet of its height. Above this level the chambers become more round, more domical and in section corresponding more closely to the outward form.

The two smaller Skellig oratories (Nos. 1 and 2, Plan 2) present a further advance in plan development though in quality of work-

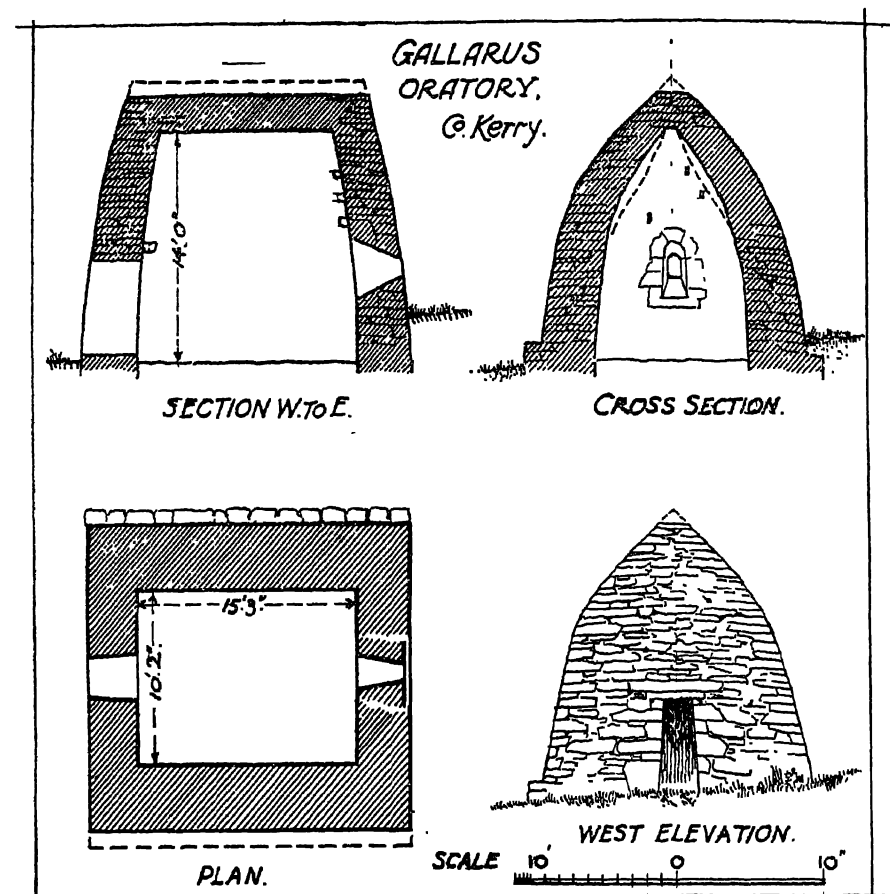


3. Skellig Michael, Kerry Oratory No. 2

manship they are inferior to most of the cells. They are oblong, not just square in plan, within and without, and rather boat-shaped in the general outline of the upper parts. The smaller, No. 2 (3) stands on a revetted platform outside the general enclosure, well to the east and north, on the very edge of the cliff. Nearly rectangular within, it measures there, on the axes, a little over 8 feet and 6 feet. A shelf or seat extends the whole length of the "south" side and another shelf at a slightly higher level lies across the "west" gable. From these shelves the wall-roof rises more steeply at the gable-ends than on the longer sides to a rather broad and flat top, both without and within. In its original shape there can be little doubt that further stonework, rising to a ridge, completed the outline. The doorway is but $3\frac{1}{4}$ feet in height and its sloping jambs average 1 foot 10 inches apart. The "east" window, a mere slot, is very peculiar in being wider than it is high².

Oratory No. 1 is similar, though larger and higher. It has, in addition to a low western shelf, another shelf or offset all round at just above the level of the door head. Its roof-walls rise rather steeply to about two-thirds of the height, where they incline inwards more quickly. There is thus quite a pronounced shoulder at this level. Over the doorway, which is just 4 feet 10 inches in height, 3 feet 8 inches wide at the sill and 6 inches less at the lintel, is a cross formed by white stones set in the stonework. The only window is in the east wall. It is nearly square in shape (1 foot 3 inches wide by a height of 1 foot 6 inches) and splays inside to a somewhat greater width.

But these little buildings, remarkable though they are as examples of corbel construction, are rude, both in form and technique when compared with the famed oratory at GALLARUS, near Kilmalkedar (4, 5, 6, 8), on the mainland some thirty miles away in a direct line from the lonely Skellig. Of a number of small corbel-built oratories on the completely rectangular plan this is the only perfect remaining example. Built without the aid of mortar, of stones carefully selected, partially wrought and ingeniously fitted together, it has stood for perhaps more than 1,200 years. It still



4. Gallarus Oratory, Kerry

(Leach : *North Munster Antiquarian Journal*)

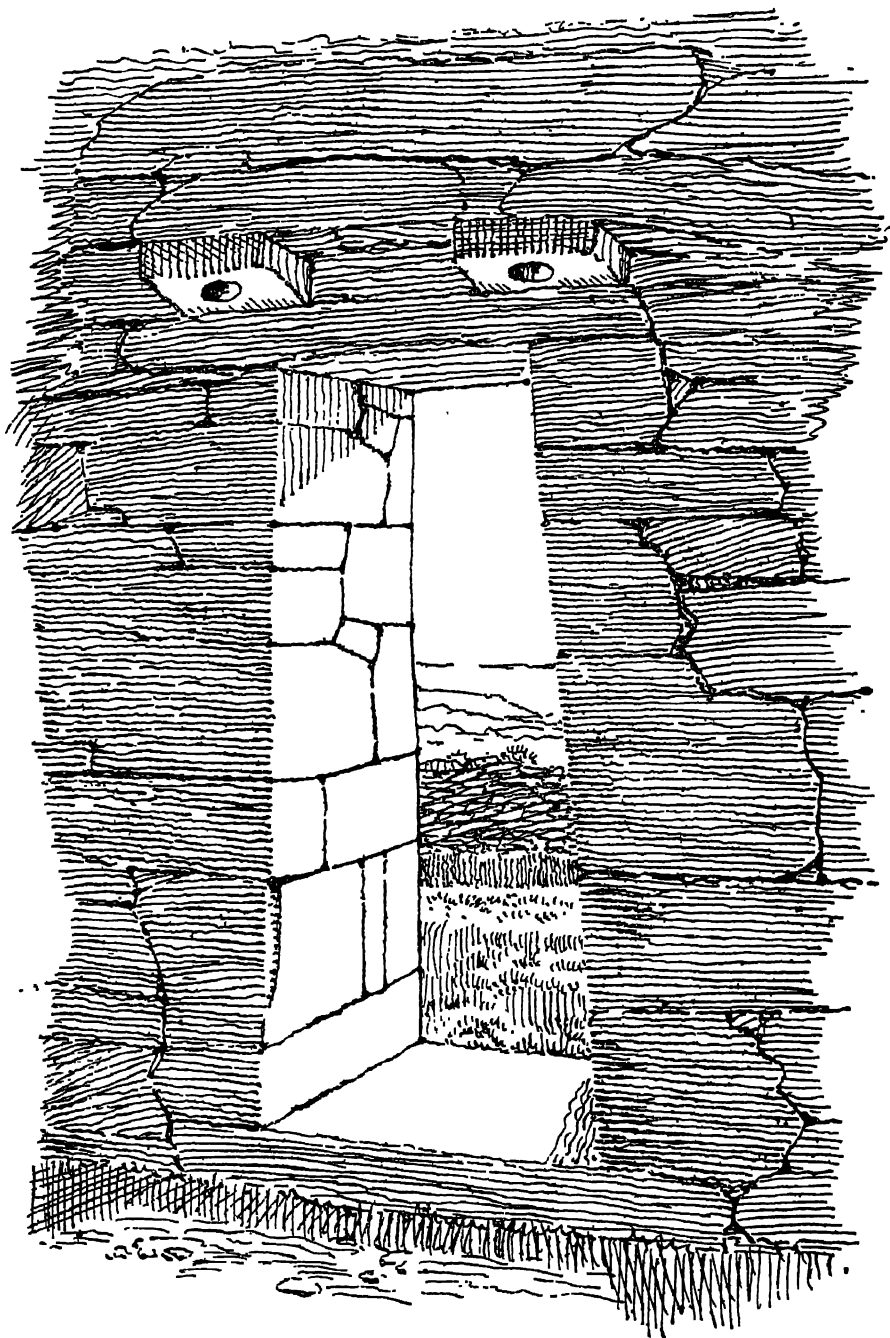
defies the moist Atlantic gales, for it is even now, as always, bone-dry within in the wettest weather. As in the clocháns the slight outward inclination of the bed-joints of the stonework directs the rain always to the outside.

Though Gallarus is built without mortar as a *structural* medium mortar is not entirely absent from the building; very fine

lime mortar has been found filling the internal joints here and there: an internal pointing to the stonework. It has also been observed filling small hollows in the inner faces of the vault, faces which were brought to a fair, smooth finish with pick or punch by the builders.³

From the outside not unlike a well-built peat rick or an inverted boat, the internal shape of the structure is that of a roughly pointed vault. The cross section of the building is very much that of the normal clochán and has, like some of them, a slight shoulder at about two-thirds height, while the end "gables" have less inward inclination and rise in an unbroken curve from foundation plinth to ridge. There are but two openings in the structure: the western doorway with inclined jambs and double lintel (5), and the very small east window (6), its round head scooped out of two stones, its embrasure splaying more widely towards the interior where an arch of three stones spans it. One of these stones passes right through the wall and forms part of the outer head. Within the building, above the door lintel, there project two stones, each pierced by a round hole. These, doubtless, served for the attachment of a door. Just what form of door has long been a matter of surmise and theory; one like a shutter, hung at the top, has been suggested: a strange mouse-trap-like contrivance, inconvenient in every respect. The absence in the stonework of any mark of a fixing or attachment makes it seem more probable that the holed stones secured the tops of two wooden door-posts, the feet of which might be set in the floor. To one of the posts a timber or wicker door could have been hinged, while the closed door could be secured to the other by some simple form of bolt or bar. Other small projecting stones high up in the east wall of the building perhaps supported altar lights or served as pegs from which book-satchels depended.

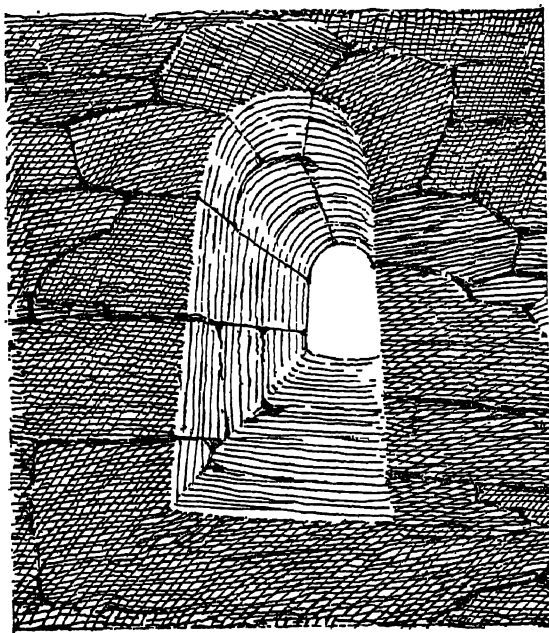
Specially to be noted in the cross section is the slight deformation which has taken place in the upper parts of the sides of the building midway in its length. This inward sagging, indicated by dotted lines in the figure, shows externally as a slight hollow.



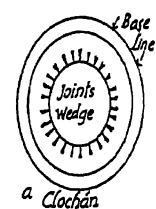
5. Gallarus, Kerry Doorway of Oratory

These are visible indications of the defect which posed the new constructional problem, arising from and inherent in a corbel vault built on a rectangular plan. As, in effect, the sides of such buildings are simply walls inclining inwards, the resistance by the wedging together of the stones, present in each course of the circular or oval clochán, is lacking. (See Chapter V for a full discussion). It is by reason of this very defect that the other structures similar in form to Gallarus in the Dingle Peninsula and elsewhere have collapsed in their upper parts. Only the very superior workmanship of Gallarus, the large stones used therein and their careful fitting together have saved it from a similar fate.

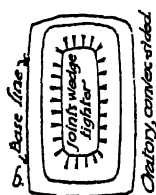
Not so well constructed as Gallarus are the two partially collapsed oratories of the same type at KILMALKEDAR and TEMPLE CASHEL, both also in Kerry. The walls of the former are relatively thin and what remains of its cross section is of a curious ogee, reversed-curve form. The oratory called Temple



6. Gallarus, Kerry East Window of Oratory

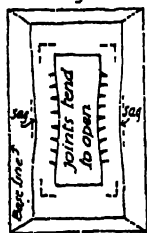


a. Clochan



Plans of upper parts of round or rounded dry stone structures.

a: Clochan; b: Oratory No 2, Skellig Michael

Plan of Gallarus Oratory
10 feet over floor
Wedging action absent7. Stone Roofs:
Horizontal Sections.

Cashel on the Ordnance Map (Kerry, Sheet 96) is in the townland of Ballinabloun Demesne, on the north side of St. Finan's Bay⁴. It is very well built of roughly hammer-dressed stone. Measuring inside its yard-thick walls 12½ feet by 10 feet 8 inches, at the present ground level, it has a low western doorway and a very small east window. Both have converging jambs and are spanned by lintels. The very short proportions of the internal plan, its style of workmanship and simple openings suggest that the structure ante-dates Gallarus.

Much more ruinous are the oratories of Temple Gel, near Ventry, where only the west wall stands; of Church Island, Valentia (18 feet by 11¼ feet inside), and the crude example at Illauntannig (Maherees) which measures but 14 feet by 9 feet inside its very thick walls.

1. Henry: *County Louth Archaeological Journal*, Vol. XI, No. 4 (1941), pp. 296-303.

2. *The Builder*, lxxii (1892), p. 142.

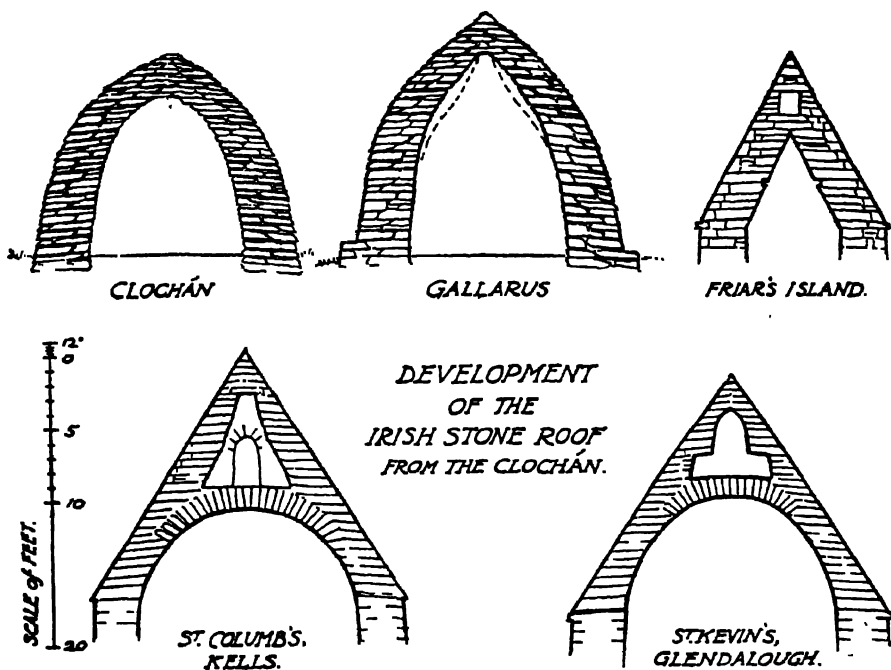
3. Dunraven: *Notes on Irish Architecture*, London (1875-77), Vol. 1, p. 60. Quoted by Lynch, *J.R.S.A.I.*, Vol. 32, pp. 58-9, and *Limerick Field Club Journal*, Vol. 2, p. 9.

4. Lynch: *J.R.S.A.I.*, Vol. 32, pp. 56-9.

Chapter V

THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE IRISH STONE ROOF

To timber buildings fire is—and was, as the annals tell—an ever-present danger in Irish monastic settlements. In the raids of the “foreigners,” so frequent and fierce in the ninth and tenth



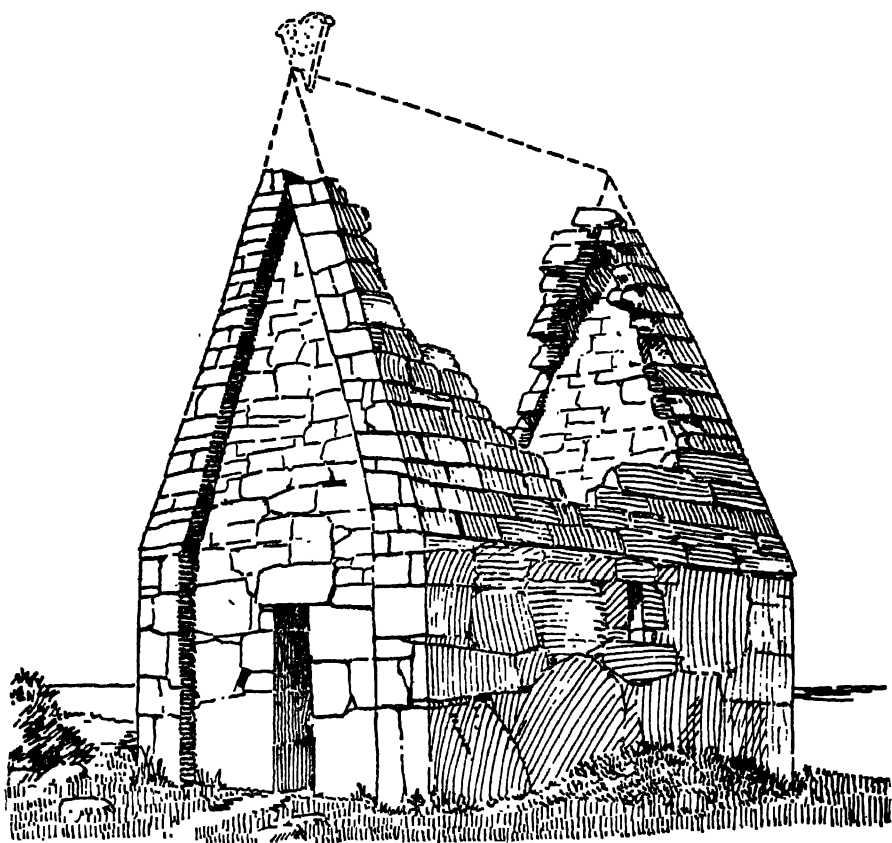
8. Stone Roofs Development from the Clochán
(Leask : *North Munster Antiquarian Journal*)

centuries and even later, many churches were burned. It cannot be doubted that both accidental and deliberate burnings, to say nothing of the natural decay of timber, must have led to replacement in stone and lime mortar and it is highly probable that the Scandinavian incursions added impetus to the process. Though the great majority of Irish church buildings in stone were roofed in perishable wood, covered with thatch, shingles or stone slabs, a small number constructed of stone throughout remain to us as important examples of the stonecraft of the Irish mason. They are examples also of his reluctance to abandon altogether the principle of encorbellment so well exemplified in the clocháns and in the Oratory of Gallarus.

Some of these structures are still perfect and stable, but in others the corbelled roofs have been destroyed or have collapsed; one, that of St. Molaise's House, Inishmurray, Sligo, has been rebuilt. The extant all-stone churches range in date from the ninth century to *circa* 1200, and it is more convenient to consider all these descendants of the clochán in this chapter, than to defer the consideration of the later examples of the type to their appropriate chronological position.

The use of mortar made it possible to construct corbelled roofs of straight-sided form: triangular within as well as without. One such is the chancel of ST. LUA'S church, Killaloe (removed from Friars' Island in the River Shannon and re-built in Killaloe in 1929). But this building, which was an addition to an earlier, timber-roofed nave, is very small and narrow (8). It measures but $6\frac{1}{2}$ feet across, and each slope of the triangular roof which spans it is 3 feet in thickness: a massive construction in relation to the space covered. This very massiveness and, of course, the cohesion of the mortar, gave ample resistance to the inward sagging tendency evident in Gallarus: the defect inherent in the corbel system in roofs of rectangular plan. None the less the builders seem to have had some qualms about the roof's stability for there are indications, notches, on both of its sides—at about half vault height inside—of the one-time presence of cross props, which must have been of timber.

On the other hand it may be that—in this case—these props were temporary precautions against inward collapse during erection and pending the setting of the roof mortar.

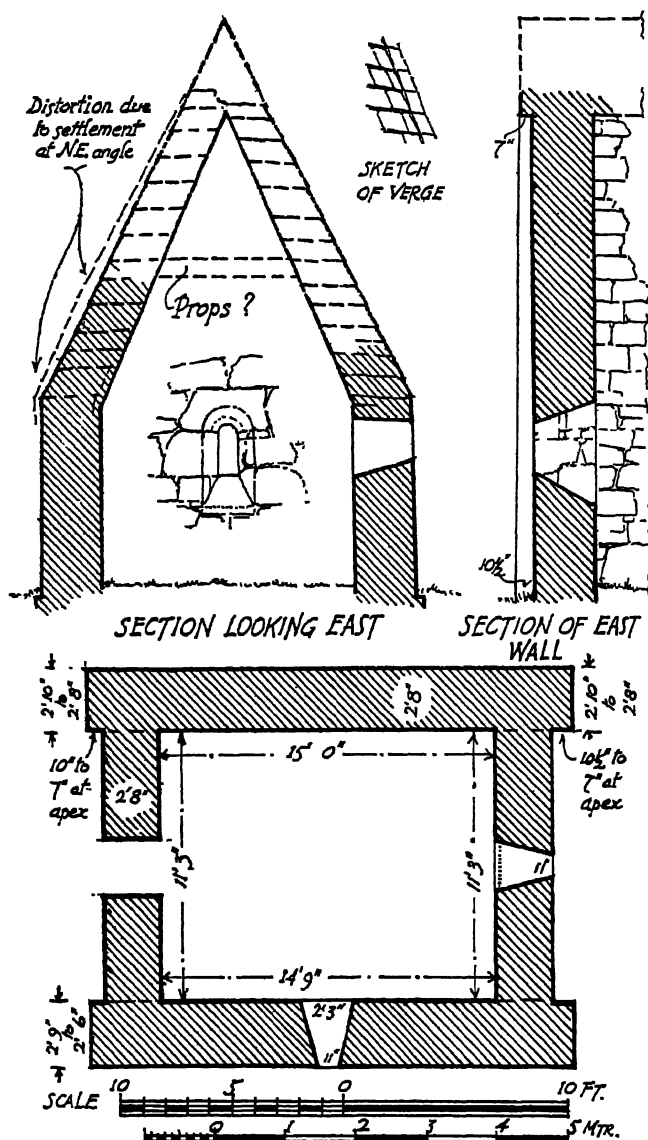


9. Temple Macdara from SW

(Leask : *North Munster Antiquarian Journal*)

In the essentially similar but wider spanned and much less massive roof of the little church on ST. MACDARA'S ISLAND, off the Galway coast (10)—to be described in more detail in a later chapter—it is highly probable that there were similar *permanent*

cross struts of timber propping the roof slopes at the critical level. The span of this triangular roof is 11 feet 6 inches, nearly twice that of the Friars' Island chancel, and the slopes were only 2 feet in

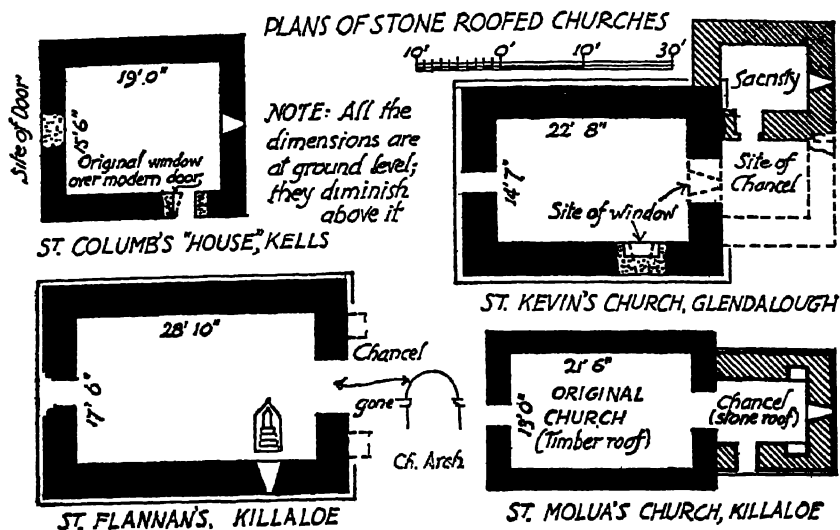


10. St. Macdara's Island, Galway
Plan and sections of Church

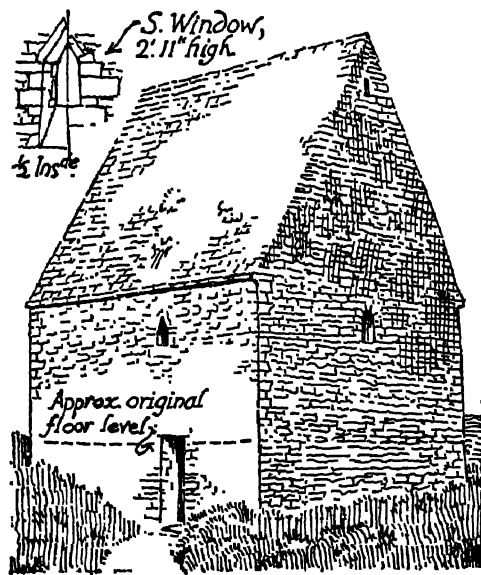
average thickness. They have collapsed, except where adjoining the gable-ends, probably because of the decay and failure of the timber supports. Without them the roof could not have stood for any great length of time.

It is not possible to date, definitely, the two small structures dealt with above; they are unrecorded. The crude massiveness of the Friars' Island chancel roof suggests an early date for it; on the other hand the roof covers a chancel, and there is reason to believe that this feature does not appear in the earlier Irish churches and perhaps not before the tenth century. Lighter in structure and much more accomplished in finish is the roof stonework of the second small church, which, both because it is a single-chamber edifice and is of the very short plan-proportion of 1.4 to 1, seems to be early. But there is a point of detail common to this church and the certainly later oratory of St. Molaise at Devenish, Fermanagh (p. 37 *infra*). It is the manner in which the verge stones of the gables are worked: a sort of false coping is wrought on each, in the solid, so as to cover and even-out the weathering and overhangs of the courses of roofing stones (10, 16). Evidently the triangular form is not, in itself, a sure indication of date; a simple structure suited a narrow span.

This tendency to sag inwards was ever present in straight-sided roof structures of this form. It had to be countered. The timber props hypothecated in the two small structures so far considered—a combination of stone and timber—was not only impermanent; it was not a true masonry technique. The Irish mason found a solution to the problem in what may be termed the propping arch. The critical level in the corbelled roof is, as has been said already, about half-way (or a little more) up the length of the slope. It is here that the sides have the greatest tendency to move towards each other, and it is here that the propping arch is placed in the most typical examples; St. Columb's House, Kells, and St. Kevin's Church, Glendalough (Pl. I, 8, 12). It has the double function of completing the inner vault and the propping apart of the opposing roof slopes. The arch has little thrust, no more, indeed, than is due



11. Plans of stone-roofed churches

12. Kells, Meath St. Columb's House
(See 8 for section)

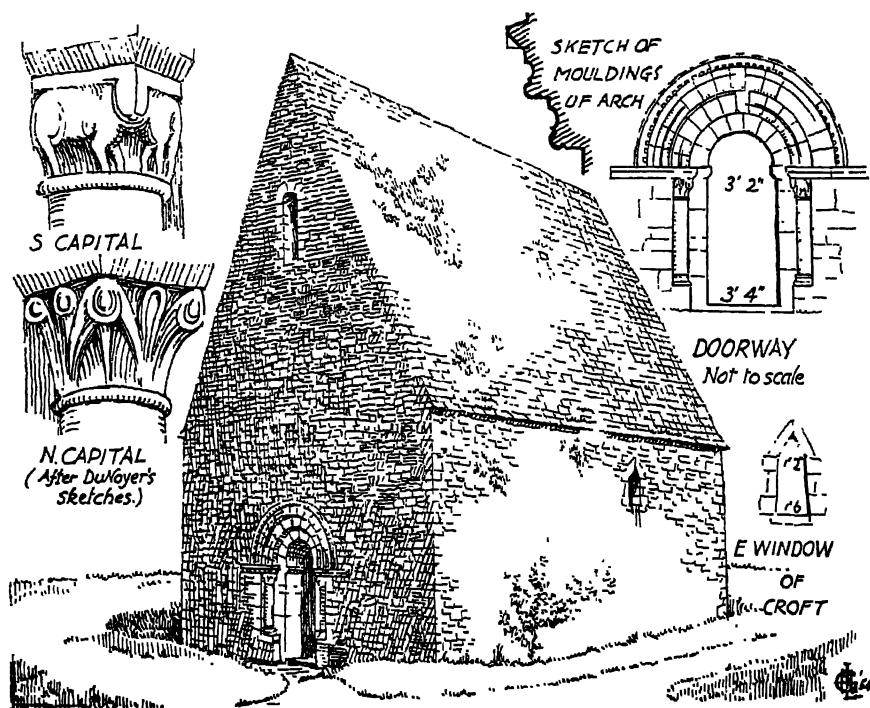
to its own weight; it is being thrust upon rather than thrusting. Were it loaded above, a strong outward pressure would be developed, and outward buckling and possibly the collapse of the roof slopes might result. Hence the contrivance, in the roof, of an open space above the arch. Though large enough to be used as apartments these little crofts, as they are called, were probably never so used; the space is a constructional expedient and an ingenious one.

Whatever may be the chronological position of the small triangular stone roofs, we are on somewhat surer ground, as to dating, with the larger and structurally more developed buildings in which the propping arch is used. The earliest of these is, perhaps, ST. COLUMB'S "HOUSE" at Kells, Meath (Plan II, 12; Roof Section, 8). It is difficult to doubt, and it is accepted by most writers, that this is the church completed in the year 814,¹ ten years after the arrival of some of the Iona community and their establishment at Kells, "given without battle . . . to Colum-Cille the musical."² The Columban monks' first church at Kells was destroyed in 807,³ and doubtless this led to the building of a stone church imperishable in character. Indeed, we read that in 819 the "doimliac" (stone church) of Cennanus (Kells) was "broken" by the "Gentiles," that is to say, the Northmen.⁴

The building is a single cell and somewhat ungainly in outer appearance, largely because of the lowering of the outside ground level and, indeed, of its floor also, by over five feet along the greater part of the length of the church. It measures, inside, about 19 feet by 15 feet 6 inches. The walls, over $3\frac{1}{2}$ feet in thickness, are battered and converge. At the springing line of the barrel-vaulted roof the building is 8 inches narrower than at the present ground level and the soffit of the vault is 23 feet over the latter. The crown of the vault is formed by a propping-arch of a breadth of about 7 feet between the corbelled slopes. There was a timber floor at the level of the base of the vault and above the arch is the usual croft in the upper part of the roof. This chamber is divided into three parts by cross walls, each with a central opening. These walls were,

doubtless, intended to stiffen the corbelling of which the whole roof, except for the propping arch, is constructed. In section the roof is practically equilateral; its pitch a little less than 60 degrees. The openings in the building are few and simple. The western doorway has vanished, its place being taken by rough masonry. The present entrance, in the south wall, is featureless and modern. Over it is a very small window with a triangular head and in the east wall is another, round-headed. Both openings splay towards the interior in the usual way. A small loop in the east gable lights the croft.

Essentially similar in construction to St. Columb's House is the well-known ST. KEVIN'S CHURCH, at Glendalough, Co. Wicklow (Pl. I, Plan II; Section, 8), colloquially the "Kitchen." For it also a ninth century date is hypothecated here. A little larger than



13. Killaloe, Clare St. Flannan's Oratory

the Kells building, it is structurally more accomplished and probably, therefore, rather later in date.

Built, for the main part, of the local stone, a slabby mica-schist, with granite for the more finished details, its walls, nearly 4 feet in thickness, have a delicate batter on all sides. This is very precise, amounting to exactly $1\frac{1}{2}$ inches at the level of the eaves-course in each wall. Moreover, the walls, as at Kells, lean in to the same extent, being of the full thickness throughout their height. They support a roof of stone built on the corbel principle with the aid of the propping arch which completes the nearly semicircular inner vault. The arch has a span of about 7 feet. The roof slopes have a pitch of about 62 degrees up to about half their height and slightly less in the upper section where each slope bends slightly inwards at two points. In this it differs from the Kells building where the slopes are quite straight from eaves to ridge. Above the vault is the croft of peculiar shape, obviously designed to avoid the imposition of any load upon the propping arch. Access to the croft is by way of an opening in the vault near the west end, as at Kells. A doorway leads into the "Round Tower" belfry and a narrow loop in the east gable gives light. There was a timber floor beneath the vault at its springing level, providing a chamber, perhaps a living-room, over the church, a circumstance by no means uncommon in early churches in Ireland. It was lighted by a small loop-window in the east wall. Four beams carried this floor. Beneath was the church proper. It had two windows; one in the east wall, round-headed and 12 inches wide, splaying to 3 feet within, another in the south wall altered into a square opening in 1834, and since built up. The west doorway (14) is both narrow and unusually high in proportion. Its jambs converge from 2 feet 4 inches apart at the sill to 4 inches less at the lintel. This is a massive slab of schist on which is wrought a level hood-moulding. Over it is a relieving arch passing right through the wall.

The church, originally a single cell, has suffered changes: the addition of a chancel and sacristy on the east, both stone-roofed, the former no longer in existence and the latter "settled" away

from the older wall; the cutting of a chancel "arch" right through the east wall and the filling up of the remains of the east window. The most notable addition is the small slender Round Tower belfry mounted on the west gable and rising to a total height of 45 feet from the ground to the top of its conical cap.

Larger than either of the foregoing examples—having a vault span of 17 feet 6 inches as against 14 feet 9 inches and 14 feet 4 inches at Kells and Glendalough, respectively—is the similarly constructed oratory of ST. FLANNAN at Killaloe (13). In its barrel vault the arch plays a larger part than it does in the churches already dealt with; it is no longer a mere prop but apparently spans the whole space and supports the external roofing stones which are laid corbel-wise. They, however, are no mere veneer but form a considerable part of a thick roof. The usual croft over the vault is 7 feet in width and has a corbelled vault of pointed form. Consequently there is a considerable mass of masonry over each "haunch" of the barrel vault below; sound construction since haunch loading is exactly what a semicircular arch requires for stability. In fact the construction adopted shows such a considerable advance in the knowledge of vault building that a relatively late date must be granted for this building. This is borne out by the west doorway—with its round arches in three orders; the outer two moulded, the inner square in section. The moulding of the outer orders is very similar to an example at Penmon, Anglesey (15) datable to the end of the eleventh century or, more probably, the early years of the next: *circa* 1100-1130. The hood-moulding is ornamented with a kind of dentil (cf. Killeshin *infra*) and supporting the chamfered imposts are two short columns set in the reveals. Carved on the capital of the southern column are two small animals (oxen or calves) uniting in one head at the angle, while the other has much worn, stiff foliage, common in the Continental Romanesque. Though the other details of the building look early: a plain chancel arch with inclined jambs and chamfered imposts; windows with triangular heads, it is probable that the date hypothesized above is not far from the truth. It is curious that the





I GLENDALOUGH, WICKLOW

St Kevin's Church

(see p 34)

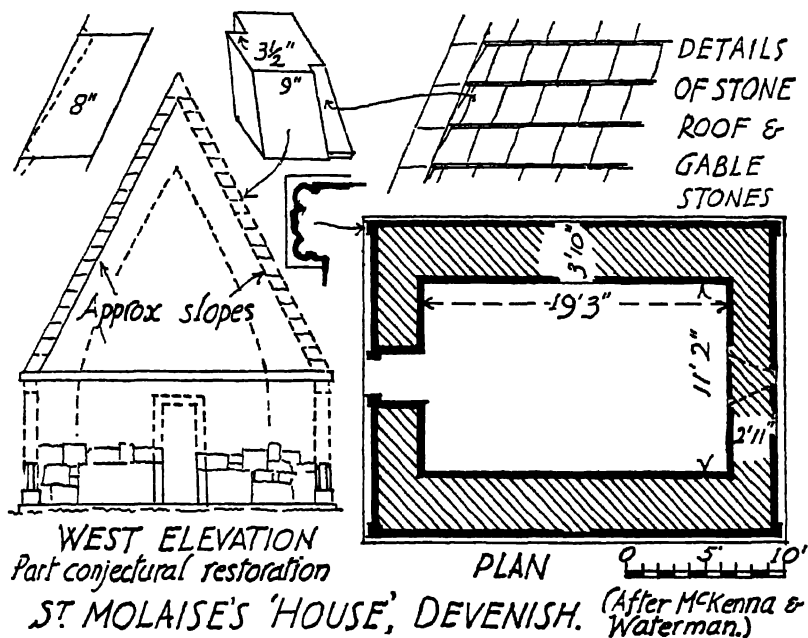


II DALKEY ISLAND, DUBLIN

St. Begnet's Church

(see p. 67)

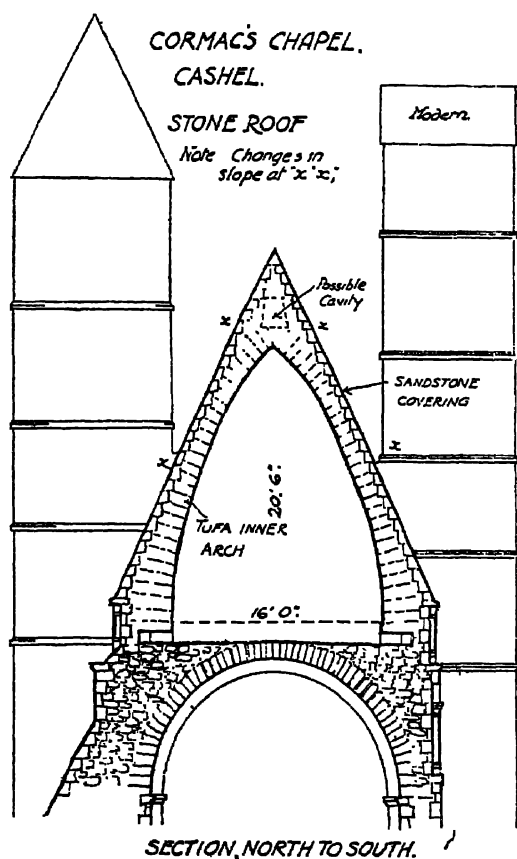
chancel arch opening is so narrow (6 feet 5 inches) in relation to the width of the vanished chancel which was 11 feet wide but of unknown length. The building had a chancel from the first, another point of contrast with the earlier stone-roofed churches.



16

The remains of another celebrated oratory of stone, the building known as St. Molaise's "House" at the island monastery of DEVENISH, in Lough Erne, are scanty (16); only the lower part of the walls and some wrought stones of its roof covering remain. The form of construction used in the stone roof is not certain; it appears to have been either entirely corbelled—straight-sided as at St. Lua's and St. Macdara's churches—or to have consisted of a sharply pointed arch (or pseudo arch) bearing an outer covering of wrought stone (cf. Cormac's Chapel croft *infra*). The latter seems to be most probable since the side walls are very thick (nearly 4 feet) in relation to the width of the building, which measures but 11 feet across internally. Moreover, one of the walls

has been pushed outwards, possibly by the thrust of the arch. The covering stones of the roof are beautifully wrought, each course overhanging by a little that below, coping and barge courses being wrought on the end stones (cf. St. Macdara's church, *supra* p. 29). The doorway was lintelled and had a simple architrave, and narrow antae bound the gable walls. They are in the form of double engaged-shafts which rise from the carved bases to be described in the Romanesque chapter of this book (69, p. 127). Suffice it to say here that they suggest a date in the twelfth century for this interesting small building.



17. Cormac's Chapel, Cashel Section of roof
(Leask : North Munster Antiquarian Journal)

So little remains of the stone roofs of the nave and chancel of the twelfth century church at Kilmalkedar, Kerry (66, 67, p. 121 *supra*) that their structural type is conjectural. Indeed, it is not certain that the former was ever completed. It is not improbable, however, that the chancel roof was of the same section and type as that of St. Macdara's church: the latter is wider by only three inches and the roof pitch is the same in both.

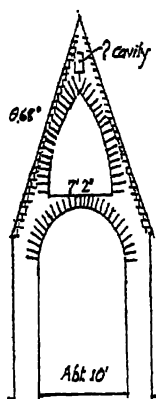
The finest example, and the most advanced of the stone-roofed Irish churches is the famed Chapel of Cormac on St. Patrick's Rock at Cashel, Tipperary (17). Its architecture will be dealt with in the Romanesque chapter; here our concern is with the construction of its remarkable roof only. This, unlike those so far considered, starts at a level well above that of the crown of the barrel-vault of normal Romanesque type which covers the body of the building.

The roof structure is of very steep pitch, 65 degrees, for half its height, a little less in the upper sections because of slight bends in the slope (as also at St. Kevin's, Glendalough). In the roof is a croft, 16 feet wide and 20 feet in height, a very impressive, vaulted apartment. Externally the roof has all the appearance of corbel construction but in fact its well-wrought courses of sandstone are no more than a facing which plays little, if any, part in the mechanics of the construction. This outer facing is borne on the real structure, a high-pitched, irregular pointed "arch" of stone of light weight, a calcareous tufa. It appears to be not quite a system of corbels nor yet quite an arch, since the bed-joints of its stones are not horizontal but have an angle with the horizon smaller than would those of a true arch radiating from a common centre. Because of the high pitch of the roof and the quasi-arch of the vault the lines of pressure must lie well within the structure of the latter. This gives security against inward sagging, outward buckling, or excessive outward thrust. But the builders took precautions against the latter by providing a system of bond-timbers at the base of the vault. Longitudinal timbers on each side were tied together across the span, at floor level, by numerous others. The cavities left by the decay of these timbers have given

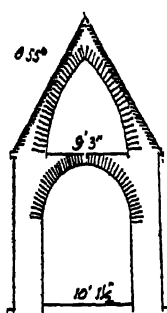
rise to the myth that the croft had a hypocaust heating system. The timber bonds, if they were not essential to permanent security, certainly gave it during the period when the roof mortar was solidifying. The great weight of the roof slopes served the same purpose as those of the oratory of St. Flannan at Killaloe: the heavy loading of the haunches of the round-arched vault below, with the effect of counteracting its strong outward thrust.

This resolution of forces—loading to direct the arch thrust and weight more vertically downwards—argues, in the builders, a considerable knowledge of practical structural mechanics. It is evidenced again, similarly, in two other stone-roofed churches of later date: one, the picturesque church of ST. DOULAGH in County Dublin (18); the other the small structure known as ST. MOCHTA'S "HOUSE" at Louth (18). In both a semi-circular vault of about 10 feet span covers the church and in the roof above is a croft with a pointed vault. In both cases this is a true arch, not a system of corbels. The St. Doulagh's roof has the very high pitch of 68 degrees. It is the steepest example in the country. The croft within is a little over 7 feet wide and $8\frac{1}{2}$ feet high; that in the Louth church is over 9 feet in width and 8 feet high, but its roof pitch of 55 degrees is unusually low. While at St. Doulagh's the external roof covering is of wrought stone—after the fashion of Cormac's Chapel—in St. Mochta's House it is made up of thin flags horizontally bedded. A date about the end of the twelfth century, or early in the 1200's, is probably near the mark for both buildings but it is to be noted that the central tower of the County Dublin church is of late (probably fifteenth century) date.

To this late date, indeed, must be assigned another example of stone roofing: the little church called St. Patrick's Chapel at ARDRASS, in north Kildare. But while its ogee-headed windows and simple pointed door, arched in but two stones, proclaim its late date, its stone roof harks back to the earlier building tradition. The single vault—there is no croft—is of irregularly pointed form and about 11 feet in span and appears to be a true arch. It is constructed of very thin flags. The exterior slopes are also of the



ST. DOULAGH'S CH.
SECTION S-N.



ST. MOCHTA'S HOUSE
LOUTH
Scale: 0' 10'

18. St. Doulagh's
Ch. Dublin.

St. Mochta's
House, Louth.
Sections.

same flags bedded horizontally. In this respect it resembles the small church at Louth. Of about the same date as St. Patrick's Chapel is Taghmon church in County Westmeath, which has a bluntly pointed vault over its whole length, and the seventeenth century provides a late example of similar construction in the Church of Ireland church at Hollywood, County Wicklow.

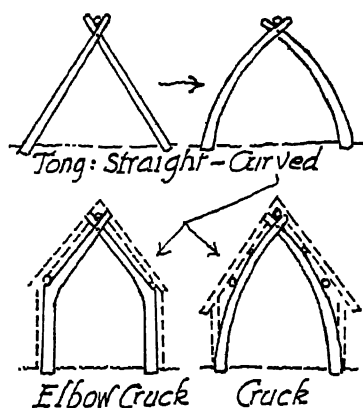
Chapter VI

THE INFLUENCE OF TIMBER CONSTRUCTION ON IRISH BUILDING IN STONE

MENTION has been made in the first chapter of the long vanished churches and oratories of timber of the early Christian centuries in Ireland. It remains to be considered whether the buildings of stone provide any indications of timber constructional forms and details: of the influence of timber prototypes.

First it must be said that a building composed of upright wall-posts supporting a roof of timber rafters is, in essence, not a very permanent thing; the sloping rafters exert an unremitting outward thrust upon the wall-posts, ending in collapse unless counteracted in some manner. This could be done in two ways: (*a*) by also supporting the roof-tree or ridge-piece (upon which the rafters rest at their apices) by another series of posts at intervals; or (*b*) by tying the feet of the rafters across the building by means of other timbers—tie-beams. There is no certain evidence in the timber constructions in other countries that the latter constructional expedient was adopted in early times. It is quite certain, from excavations, that method (*a*) was employed in early houses in this country. But the inconvenience of centrally placed posts in a church, however small, must have been manifest. There is, however, another form of timber construction practised over a wide area in north-western Europe “from at least the Iron Age,”¹—the form known as “cruck” building. This system was a development from something still simpler, which has been called the “Tong” support.² In this last a series of pairs of straight timbers were set

in the ground but inclined to meet and cross at the upper ends and there support the roof-tree. It is still in use for minor sheds, outbuildings and the like from Italy to Scandinavia, particularly in the northern lands. The article cited quotes evidences of numerous examples of various dates from prehistoric times onwards.



19. Crucks

Obviously, in a building in which the roof extends in straight slopes right down to the ground level, the standing space within is much restricted and a great improvement could be—and was—obtained by the use of curved timbers (19) instead of the straight “tong” supports. Suitably curved trees or branches were sought for and set opposite to one another in similar pairs. These are the “crucks.” In some relatively modern surviving examples single trees were split or sawn to make symmetrical pairs. As in the “tong” support buildings these “cruck” pairs—principals, in modern technical usage—supported other timbers (purlins) running length-ways of the building, and on these again the roof covering of branches, bark, sods, or even stone slabs was laid. It is obvious that the resulting structure would have very much the same external appearance as that of an upturned boat. Gallarus and other oratories have, in fact, a form not unlike this, and it is conceivable that cruck construction may have had almost as much

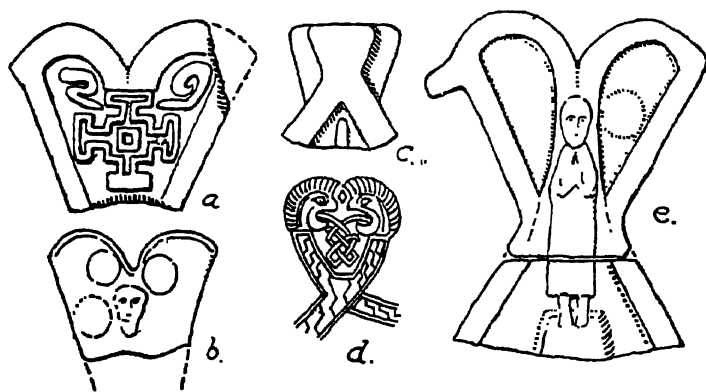
influence in producing the form as the progression or development in corbelling method from the clochán already postulated.

But the curved cruck is not the only one; in Wales there are surviving examples of what has been termed the "elbow-cruck."³ In this the builders sought for straight-stemmed trees, each having a main branch issuing at such a height and angle as would be suitable to the wall height and roof slope of the structure in hand. By cutting off the unwanted parts of the main stem and all branches but that chosen for use, the builders provided themselves with a series of supports—wall-post and main rafter in one—for erection in pairs; the butts of the trees set in the ground, the arms or branches crossed at the roof-tree in the same manner as straight tong or curved cruck. Admittedly it would be difficult to obtain a large number of suitably shaped elbow-crucks but that it was possible is shown by surviving examples of relatively late date.⁴ The development from the curved cruck seems obvious and the elbow form may well have been arrived at in quite early times. However this may be there is one small stone church building in Ireland which has features suggesting an elbow-cruck prototype (19). This is the church on St. Mac Dara's Island, off the Galway coast (9, 10).

St. Macdara's Church, saluted by every passing fishing boat, is quite small and more than normally short in proportion of length to breadth 15 feet to 11 feet 4 inches; about 1.4 to 1—with relatively thick walls containing a number of massive stones. The masonry is also notable for a plentiful use of spalls packed into the wider joints. Though no mortar is visible in the external joints, there can be no doubt that the body of the masonry was grouted with liquid mortar, a constructional method sometimes adopted by the early builders. The structure had a high-pitched roof of stone built on the corbel principle and averaging about 2 feet in thickness, similar to, though less massive than, the roof to the much narrower chancel of St. Lua's Church, Killaloe (see p. 28), i.e., straight-sided and lacking the propping arch. This roof has fallen except at the gable-ends, as might be expected. It must have stood for some

period with the aid of cross struts of timber with which, as has been stated already, there is reason to believe the Killaloe St. Lua's church roof was provided.

But the unique feature of St. Macdara's Church is the continuation of the projections of the antae up the gable slopes. It is the combination of antae and, as it were, gable rafters or barges in one that suggests a timber prototype of the elbow-cruck form. The other features of the building are normal: slightly battered walls, lintelled door, round-headed east window splaying towards the interior, and a small lintelled window near the centre of the south wall. The broken ornamented finial which lies in the church doubtless once crowned a gable. It is of a form plainly derived from



20. Gable Finials

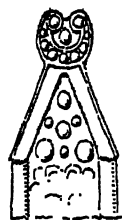
(a) Iniscealtra, Clare; (b) St. Macdara's Island, Galway; (c) Clones, Monaghan; (d) Book of Kells Ornament; (e) Freshford, Kilkenny: Holy Well

(Leach : *N. Munster Antiquarian Journal*)

the crossing of the gable rafters or barge-boards of timber roofs. There are many surviving examples of these translations into stone of a timber constructional feature (20). The gable-ends of the top stones of the High Crosses furnish several : Muiredach's Cross and the West Cross at Monasterboice (21), the Durrow High Cross and the stone sarcophagus at Clones (22). A fragment survives at Iniscealtra (20 a) and a larger one near Killaloe Cathedral. The holy well at Freshford, Kilkenny, is crowned (20 c) with another and the

figure of the Temple, in the Book of Kells, exhibit notably rich examples (20 d). There is a suggestion of the termination of the ridge pole or roof-tree in the gable of the Durrow cross (22).

It is interesting to note that in north Germany there still survive ancient timber features of the same kind (22) in thatched buildings. These crossed timbers are not always in these instances extensions of the gable rafters but serve to anchor rods running parallel with the roof ridge; rods which, in turn, hold down the thatch ridge-capping. In farm buildings in modern Denmark thatch at the ridges is secured by timbers in X-form (22) at intervals between the gables, a very practical expedient which may be of some antiquity.

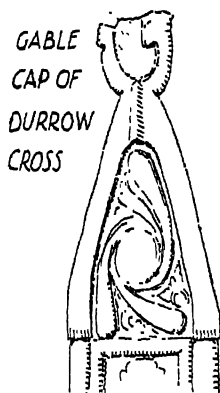


GABLE OF
MUIREDACH'S
MONASTERBOICE

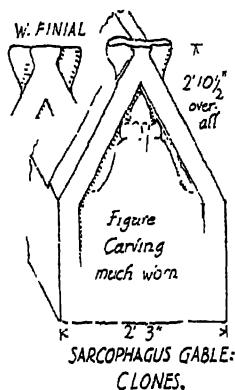


GABLE OF
WEST CROSS
MONASTERBOICE

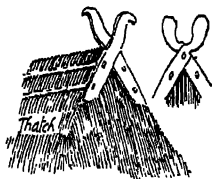
21. Gables of High
Crosses



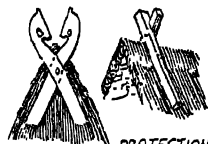
GABLE
CAP OF
DURROW
CROSS



SARCOPHAGUS GABLE:
CLONES.



RIDGE-ENDS, N. GERMAN
CIRCA XVIITH CY



HORSE-HEAD
RIDGE-END. PROTECTION
OF RIDGES IN
MODERN DENMARK

22. Gable Finials

1. Walton: *The Development of the Cruck Framework*. *Antiquity*, Vol. 88 (December, 1949), pp. 179-189.

2. *ibid.*

3. *ibid.*

4. Peate: *The Welsh House*, Liverpool (1944), pp. 160 et seq.

Chapter VII

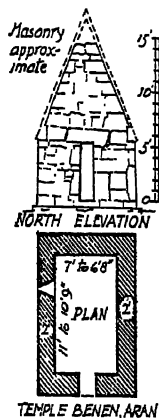
EARLY CHURCHES IN MORTARED STONE

1. CHARACTERISTICS AND FEATURES

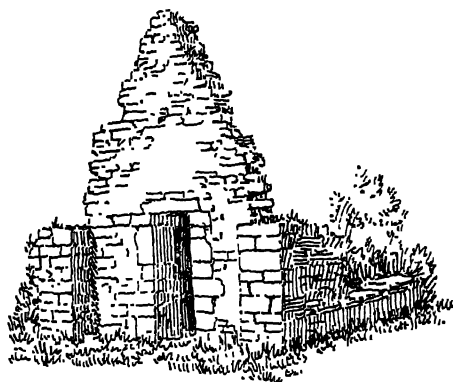
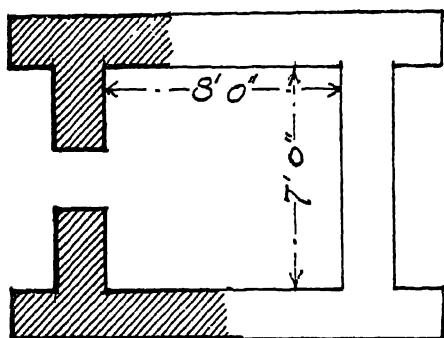
THE discussion of the development of the Irish stone roof in Chapter V is, in part, a digression from the main theme, since the number of buildings so covered is small in comparison with those roofed in the normal if less durable manner. Moreover, the majority of the massive all-stone erections already described are later in date than many of the simple buildings which now claim attention. This attention will first be directed to the characteristics of these structures: plan-type and dimensions, masonry, details, etc., and then, in subsequent sections of the chapter, to individual examples.

Early Plans

The early churches are very simple buildings, single-chamber structures with no division into nave and chancel. They are small, even very small, in size; simple oblongs in plan. The church of ST. BENEN on Aranmore, Galway (23), for instance, measures internally but $10\frac{1}{2}$ feet by 7 feet. The most usual proportion is the short oblong; that in which the length within is seldom greater—and is in some instances even less—than one and a half times the breadth. This proportion, where it occurs, seems to be an indication of early date. In this connexion it is interesting and suggestive that the Brehon Law Tract, already referred to (p. 6), dealing with the payment to the artificer for the construction of oratories and stone churches, specifically mentions dimensions of 15 feet by



10 feet, precisely the length-breadth proportion of one and a half to one. The famous Gallarus oratory, though not precisely of these dimensions, approximates very closely to this proportion in its internal plan as do many others, as will be seen.



24. Inchcleraun, Longford
Teampull Dhiarmaida

In the chapter on the development of the stone roof emphasis was laid on the solution of a structural problem rather than on plan proportions. Since this chapter is to be concerned with normally roofed buildings—and very much with their dimensions—it is, therefore, desirable to note here the internal length-breadth ratios of the earlier of the structures which are, or were, covered by roofs of stone.

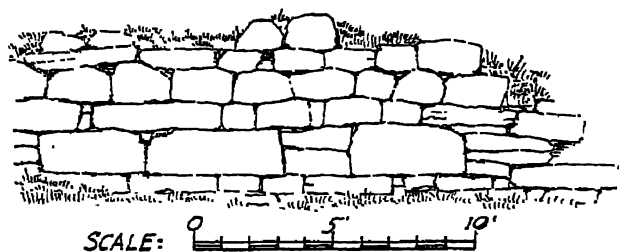
The shortest of them are the diminutive Teampull Dhiarmaid, Inchcleraun (24), and "Molaise's House," Inishmurray. The first measures but 8 feet by 7 feet inside and the latter is less than 9 feet by 8 feet. The roof of the Inchcleraun oratory has gone and that of the County Sligo island building is a reconstruction. (It has been omitted from the discussion of roof development for this reason.)

In the church of St. Macdara's island (9) the internal length-breadth ratio is 1.4 to 1: St. Columb's, Kells and St. Kevin's, Glendalough (Plan, 11), are, respectively, 1.22 and 1.55 to 1, and in St. Flannan's, Killaloe (11, 13) the relation is 1.64 to 1. This progression from short to longer in these three all stone churches accords well with the relative datings assigned to them in earlier pages.

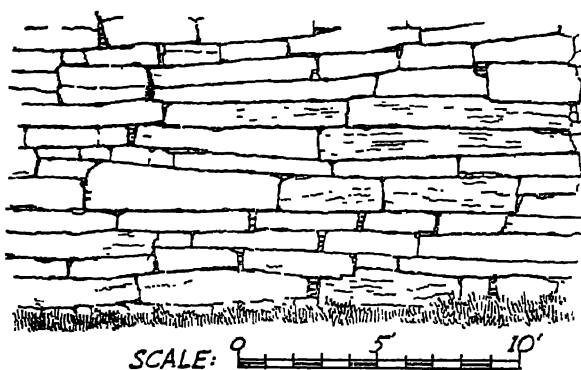
Masonry

The stone used for the walling of most churches, both early and late was, naturally and usually, the stone of the locality. This applies in most cases to the door and window dressings though instances of the use of stone from a distance for these purposes are not uncommon when, for instance, the locality did not afford stones of the large size and fine quality desired for such features.

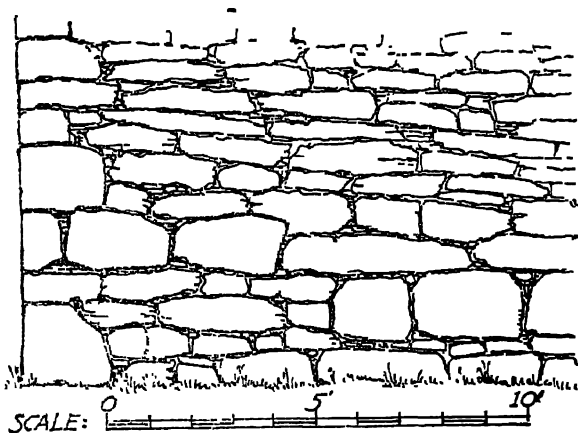
The general style of masonry is what would be known, technically, in modern times as uncoursed rubble, i.e., unwrought or roughly-dressed stones not laid in regular courses. Many stones are of a massiveness not often found in modern masonry. There was, indeed, a strong preference for such stones particularly, but by no means always, in the lower parts of the walls and, as will be seen, around the entrance doorways. In the limestone districts of the west in particular, where wide and long but not necessarily very thick stones were obtainable with relative ease, these were often set on edge, presenting to view a large surface of the natural bed. The appearance rather than the fact of great massiveness being thus attained. It may be judged that the megalithic tradition still lived in Irish masonry or that the builders used large stones in order to



25. Kiltiernane, Galway



26. Oughtmama, Clare



27. Glendalough (St. Mary's Church), Wicklow

save mortar. These large wall-stones are often fitted together with remarkable accuracy; natural irregularities in one stone are fitted to corresponding irregularities in others adjoining, nearly perfect correspondence being attained with a minimum of masons' work. This style of Irish masonry has often been mis-called Cyclopean; but the Irish work, while less gigantic, is more accomplished. Normally, in Irish masonry, labour upon jointing was minimized by the use of small pieces of stone, spalls, tightly packed into the more open joints resulting from the irregularities of adjoining stones. In addition to the examples of masonry shown in the illustrations of individual buildings others are illustrated (25, 26, 27). They may be assigned to the ninth or tenth centuries but it must be said here, in general terms, that while changes in masonry types in any one building usually indicate differences of date it is not possible to arrive at definitive dating from masonry types alone. Local geology is a very potent factor; where good stone was readily available styles seem to have changed but slowly; where the supply was of poor quality a very rude-looking structure is not necessarily an early one. Indeed, many buildings which can be shown from their details to be of a quite late date are more rudely constructed than others no less certainly early.

Walls, Gables and Roofs

The side walls of most of these small churches are of no great height—as little as 7 feet in some cases—but the end walls are (or were—many gables have been partially broken down) relatively high because of the steep pitch of the roofs, resulting in a total gable height often three times that of the longer walls. Temple Benen, Aran (23) and Liathmore, Tipperary (36) are examples. Several factors may have played a part here: the influence of the stone roof—only stable if steep; a desire to reduce the outward thrust exerted by the roof timbers on the walls; the nature of the roof covering itself. The last is perhaps the most important. The roof inclinations—of 60 or more degrees with the horizon—corresponding with the high gables, would be unnecessarily high



'ROOF OF MUUREDACH'S
CROSS, MONASTERBOICE

28

for thatch, for instance, which can be and often is laid quite satisfactorily at pitches between 45 and 50 degrees, though thatch is not for this reason alone unacceptable. Thatch of reeds rather than straw may have been used but would not call for a much steeper pitch. For heavy stone, slate-like, slabs of the type sometimes found about ancient churches a very steep pitch is undesirable because of the extra shearing stress which the wooden fixing pegs would have to bear in consequence. On the other hand, timber shingles, of split oak or the like (yew is mentioned in one record [p. 6] are all the more durable if laid to a quick slope. In medieval times shingles were certainly used and it seems highly probable that many early roofs had similar coverings. Moreover, the summits of some of the high crosses, which are obvious translations of gabled roof-forms, show courses representing roof coverings with regular edges (28); such regular shaping, easy in timber, would be extremely laborious, if not impossible, in stone slabs or flags.

The "Batter"

Another building characteristic, observable in many Irish structures of both early and late date (it persisted in Irish building custom into the eighteenth century and in attenuated form and only at the angles of buildings even into the nineteenth century) is the inward sloping of walls, known as the batter. It is not probable that it has its origin in timber constructional technique but there are good and practical reasons for its adoption in earth or dry masonry constructions. In the stone architecture of Egypt it is very pronounced and has its origin in the early buildings of Nile mud, with their broad-based walls—sloping inwards for the sake of stability. The earth- or mud-built cottages of the Irish countryside, survivals—fast vanishing—of an old and practical tradition, provide examples nearer to hand. In the Ireland of to-day there are many buildings of dry stone and the technique of dry-stone fence or wall building still lives: stability in such structures is still sought and obtained by battering, which gives a measure of security against the slipping or spreading of the stonework.

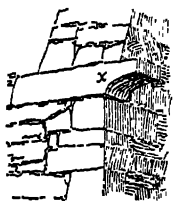
The batter in the early churches built in mortar, and in the more advanced work of later periods, is subtle; a matter of but a few inches in the height of the walls. In many cases it is barely perceptible. Generally the whole wall is inclined inwards with no reduction in its thickness: accurate measurements taken of some buildings (cf. St. Kevin's Church, Glendalough) show that the interior as well as the exterior dimensions diminish regularly from the ground level upwards.

Though adopted for practical reasons in the first instance, the batter seems to have been retained in later works as a grace, an architectural refinement, giving not only a sense of stability but aesthetic satisfaction. The batter is very conspicuous in the Round Towers; without it they would lack all grace and something of the sense of stability. In some of them it seems to be combined with a very slight entasis, that slight swelling which, in the Classic column, is the refinement of outline designed to overcome an appearance of hollowness in the silhouette of the uprising line. It would be strange, indeed, if pilgrims and travelling scholars from or to Ireland brought home no memory with them of temple pillars: such notable features of Roman lands. It must be admitted, however, that only an artificer in stone, a mason, would have been sensitive to so subtle a refinement as the entasis; that a cleric pilgrim would observe and note it seems less likely.

Antae

Another peculiarity of Irish church buildings—found in many early examples but appearing in others as late in date as the middle of the twelfth century—are the peculiar, pilaster-like projections of the side walls to east and west beyond the gables, known to architects as *antae*, a term borrowed from Greek architecture. In Irish buildings they served a practical purpose: the support of the roof timbers in advance of the gables. They certainly were not buttresses since, in this position there is no thrust to be resisted. Several theories have been advanced as to their origins. Some writers derive them from the Classic pilaster; others hold that they

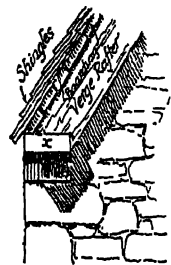
are translations into stone of the corner posts of timber prototypes and thus derived from timber building. Yet another theory is that they represent the pilaster-like end walls of the megaron: the Mediterranean house, examples of which have been unearthed at Mycenae, Tiryns, Troy and elsewhere. None of these theories are fully convincing but the second seems to be nearest to the truth. A modification of it was discussed in the account of the church on St. Macdara's Island off the Galway coast (pp. 29, 45 *supra*) where derivation from the elbow-cruck is suggested.



TRINITY CH. GLENDALOUGH
CORBELS TO GABLES

In many churches which do not possess antae there are corbel stones projecting at the base of the gables (29). These plainly served to support roof timbers—end rafters or barge boards—as in practice did the antae in a more striking way.

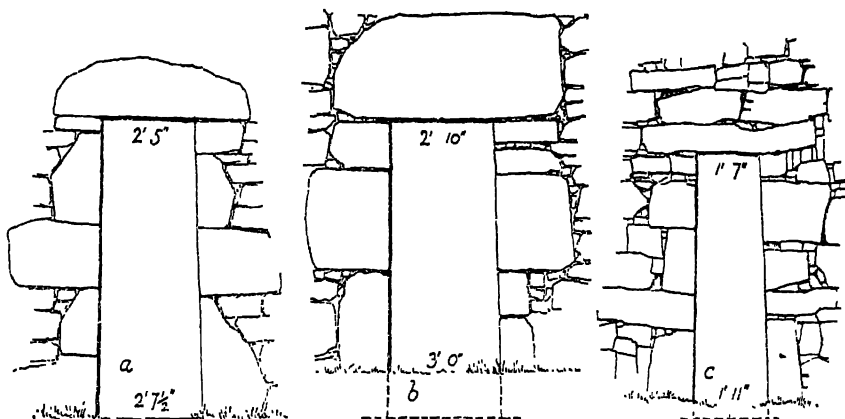
Doorways



RESTORATION OF ABOVE

29. Glendalough
Wicklow: Gable
Corbel,
Trinity Ch.

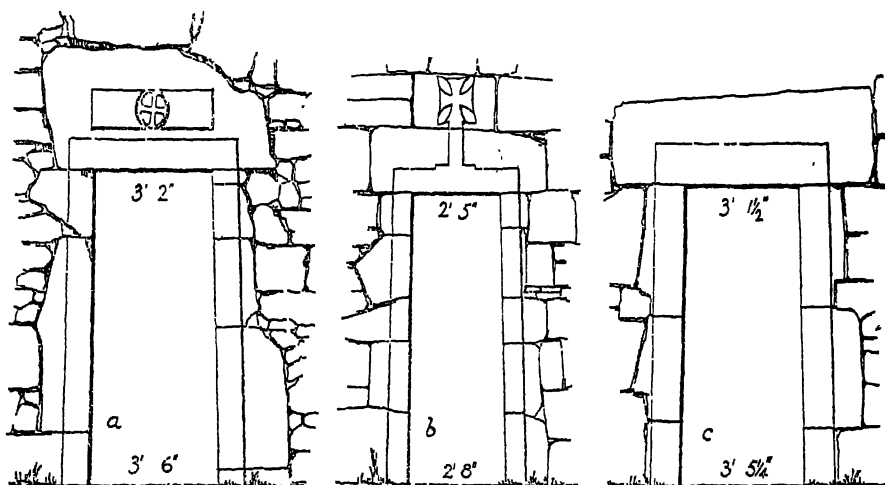
In any age the simplest form of door or window opening is flat-headed: spanned by a level lintel. Most of the doorways in early Irish buildings are of this kind but have another peculiarity by no means so common: the sides of the openings—the jambs—incline inwards toward one another. The opening is, therefore, narrower under the lintel than at the sill or threshold: the diminution in width being commonly from 3 to 4 inches. While in theory and fact the reduction in span gave additional strength to the lintel this consideration cannot have weighed with the Irish masons since the lintels they erected are often more massive than any other stones in the building—more than adequate to their function. A theory deriving the inclined jambs from Classic sources is not untenable but one thing at least, is obvious. It is that the sloping jambs of Irish doorways and windows parallel and harmonize with the battered walls in which they stand. The illustrations (30 and 31, and also 5, 10, 35, 36) show examples of lintelled doorways, some of the simplest form, and others elaborated by the addition of a raised border; an architrave. On a small number of lintels the cross symbol is carved or engraved: there is a Greek cross between four roundels on the face at St. Molaise's House, Inishmurray, and



30. Lintelled Doorways

(a) Trinity Church, Glendalough, Wicklow; (b) Killeavy, Armagh; (c) Kilgobnet Church, Aran Galway

(Leash : *North Munster Antiquarian Journal*)

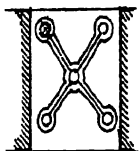


31. Lintelled Doorways with Architraves

(a) St. Fechin's Church, Fore, Westmeath; (b) Clonamery, Kilkenny; (c) Tomgraney, Clare

(Leash : *North Munster Antiquarian Journal*)

circle inscribed symbols at Gallen; a saltire on the soffit of the doorway of St. Mary's church at Glendalough (32); and crosses in relief over the architraves at Fore and Clooneamery (31). These are the most notable examples. In most doorways use is made of

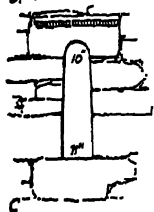
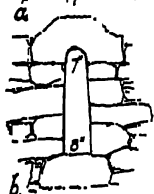
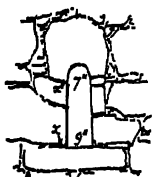


CROSS ON LINTEL, ST.
MARY'S, GLENDALOUGH



INISHMURRAY, GALLÉN
CROSSES ON LINTELS

32. Crosses on
Lintels



EARLY WINDOWS

a: Friars' Island Ch.
(x, xi) Traces of iron.
b, c, & d: All from
Trinity Ch. Glendalough.

large stones—often running right through the wall—exceedingly well wrought and fitted together, giving to these unadorned openings permanence and massiveness, even a degree of majesty.

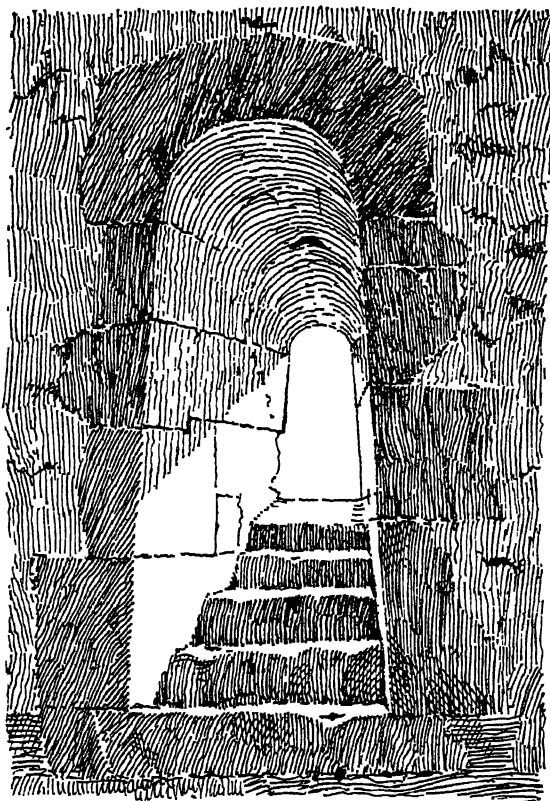
Among lintelled doorways not illustrated or mentioned later, the following, which are notable for well-fitted masonry of large stones, may be cited: Agharra (Longford), Drumacoo (Galway), Inismaine Abbey (Mayo), Kilcrone (Wicklow), Killeavy (Armagh), Kilmacduagh Cathedral and Kiltiernane (both in Galway). In the church of Temple Martin, Kerry, the west doorway is remarkable in having a *sunk* architrave with a roll moulding, projecting, around the opening. This treatment perhaps places the doorway in the same category as that of Banagher church (*infra* p. 83).

Windows

Windows in early churches, and in those of times so late as the twelfth century, were few in number and small in size. Often the only window is that in the east wall, above the altar; sometimes there is another window, or perhaps two, in the south wall. They are very narrow, frequently no more and often less than six inches in width, with inclined jambs, and usually spanned at the head by a single stone in which the round head of the opening is wrought (see a, b and c, 33). Inwards from these narrow lights the jambs of the openings splay widely—a window 6 inches or less in width may have an embrasure many times as wide at the inner face of the wall, thus admitting to the interior the maximum of light afforded by the small outer opening (34). A true round arch usually spans the inner opening, but occasionally a single stone, cut to arch form, suffices. That the Irish masons knew the arch form and built true arches at a very early period is obvious. Flat-headed, lintelled, windows also occur in early buildings but the type persists into much later times and is, in itself, not necessarily an indication of great antiquity: it is found in crude but obviously late structures. Another form of early window is that with a triangular head (d, 33). Those formed of two stones leaning against one another are not

uncommon; rarely is the head worked in a single stone. The inward splay is generally less pronounced than in the round-headed variety.

The lower part of the splayed embrasure is often formed of descending steps (34); less common is a plain slope. There does not appear to have been any glass in the windows but indications of the one-time presence of external shutters—rusted iron in the outer joints—have been found; notably in the small church once on Friars' Island, Killaloe (33a,x,x').



34. Killaloe, Clare St. Lua's Church, East Window

2. SINGLE CHAMBER STRUCTURES

Some of the single-chamber churches are so small that they could not have held more than two or three people in addition to

priest and acolyte; it would be more accurate to call them oratories. Even in the larger of them the congregations cannot have been numerous. This diminutiveness puzzles the observer of to-day who often asks for an explanation. Perhaps this is to be found in the low-walled enclosure which survives at Duvillaun (p. 15) and some other places, where a sub-division of the enclosed space may have constituted an open-air church to which the little oratory itself served as both tabernacle and sacristy. At this and several similar sites a large, upright and carved slab stands beside the oratory, and at the head of a tomb, presumably that of the saintly founder. Against this slab a wooden altar could be placed to become the focus of the open-air gathering.¹

One is tempted to believe that such gatherings may have been less subject to hardship—have been much more generally possible and usual—in the period when the very small churches were erected, and that it is significant that the climate of the sixth and seventh centuries, though deteriorating slowly during the latter, was much finer and warmer than it is to-day.²

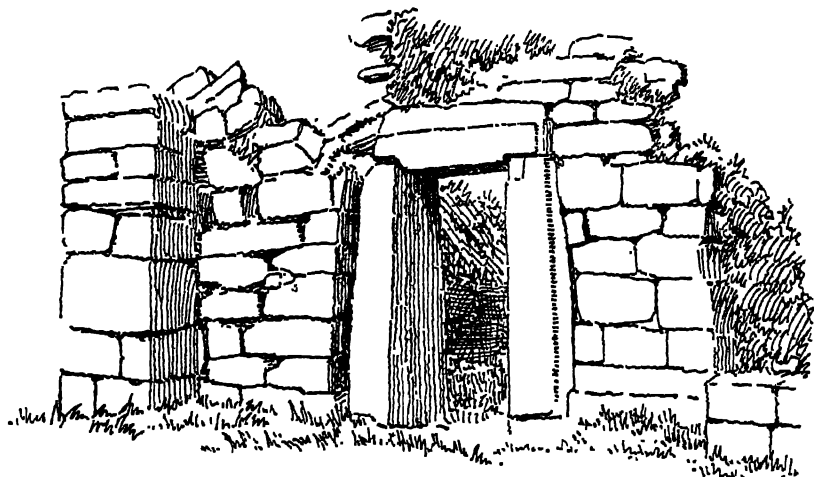
Earlier in this chapter the short, internal length - breadth proportion of about one and a half or less to one in these churches has been noted as a probable indication of their early date. In the description of the examples which follow it will be referred to again, with the implication that an increase in the ratio connotes later dating. It is certainly noteworthy that the structures which look most archaic are generally of the shortest proportion.

Since there is reason to believe that the projections of the side walls beyond the gables are derived from timber construction (p. 45, St. Macdara's Island church) the buildings which have them are given first place among the examples. It should be understood, however, that the presence of these features does not necessarily mean that the structures which possess them are earlier in date than others in which they are absent: antae occur even in buildings of the twelfth century—survivals of the early tradition.

2a. *Examples of Small Structures with Antae*

TEAMPULL DHIARMIDA, on Inchcleraun (Quaker Island), Lough Ree, seems to be the smallest which survives (24). It is much ruined and measures, inside, but 8 feet from east to west and 7 feet in breadth; an exceptionally short proportion. The remaining walls are regularly constructed and the antae project strongly. Conceivably its roof was of stone but there can be no certainty that this was the case. Near the Cathedral at CLONMACNOISE is the partially collapsed TEAMPULL CHIARAIN, a quite plain building with the internal dimensions of $12\frac{1}{2}$ feet by 8 feet: a ratio of 1.56 to 1—rather over the average. The walls are relatively thin and are not particularly well built and for these reasons may not be of very early date. Possibly the date suggested by Macalister³ c. 920, is not far wide of the truth. There are remains of a little church, possibly of the eighth century, with antae, at Derry, near Portaferry, Down, measuring about 18 feet by 12 feet inside; exactly the average proportion. For mortar it has hard yellow clay.⁴

A little larger than the Clonmacnoise example is LABBA MOLAGA, Cork, a much ruined and much restored oratory (35).



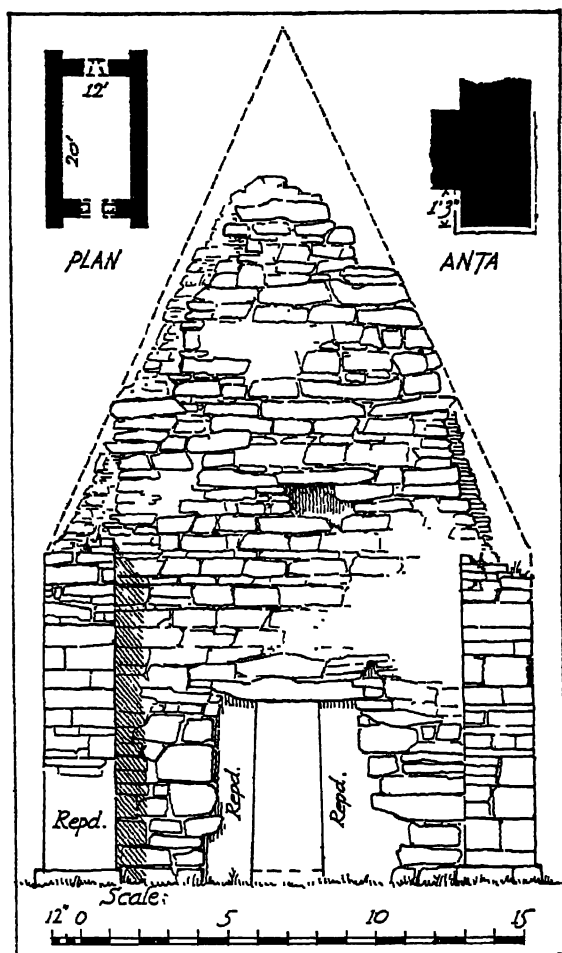
35. Labba Molaga, Cork West Wall of Church before repair.

It is just over 13 feet long and about $9\frac{1}{2}$ feet wide inside: a proportion of 1.4 to 1, again very close to the average. The outstanding feature of this small building is the west doorway. It is unique among Irish examples in being constructed of but three stones. This almost megalithic character of construction suggests an early date for the door. The opening is bordered, however, by a projecting architrave; apparently a relatively advanced feature since it appears in at least one building assignable to the tenth century (see Tomgraney, (p. 69). On the other hand the very short proportion of the church is an early sign and an architraved door in the ninth century appears to be quite possible (cf. St. Fechin's Ch., Fore, (p. 69). (see c, and a, 31).

The small building known as ST. DECLAN'S HOUSE or oratory at ARDMORE, Waterford, is almost exactly of the average plan-proportion since its inside measurements are 13 feet 4 inches by 9 feet. Its antae are of bold projection. In all probability the building originally had a stone roof but the rebuilding of the upper parts in relatively modern times has obliterated any definite traces. The church on St. Macdara's Island, next among these examples in order of size, has been described already (pp. 29, 45) and it is only necessary here to refer again to its short plan-proportion of 1.4 to 1.

Close to the larger church (itself a structure which had antae) at Leighmore: LIATHMORE-MOCHOEMOG, Tipperary, is a smaller one which has lost its doorway and east window (36). Larger than the previously cited examples; measuring 20 feet in internal length, and in breadth 12 feet—the ratio of 1.66 to 1—it may well be less ancient than its simplicity suggests. The masonry of its walling is very regular in appearance, almost coursed, but this is probably due to the even-bedded character of the local limestone. The gables are of extra steep pitch and the roofing was certainly of timber⁵. Of nearly the same plan dimensions as the preceding example, but in proportion closer to the average, is the church at KILLOUGHTERNANE, Co. Carlow (Plan: 37). It has antae of slight prominence and a small, round-headed, east window of unusually wide proportions and spanned by a true arch. The

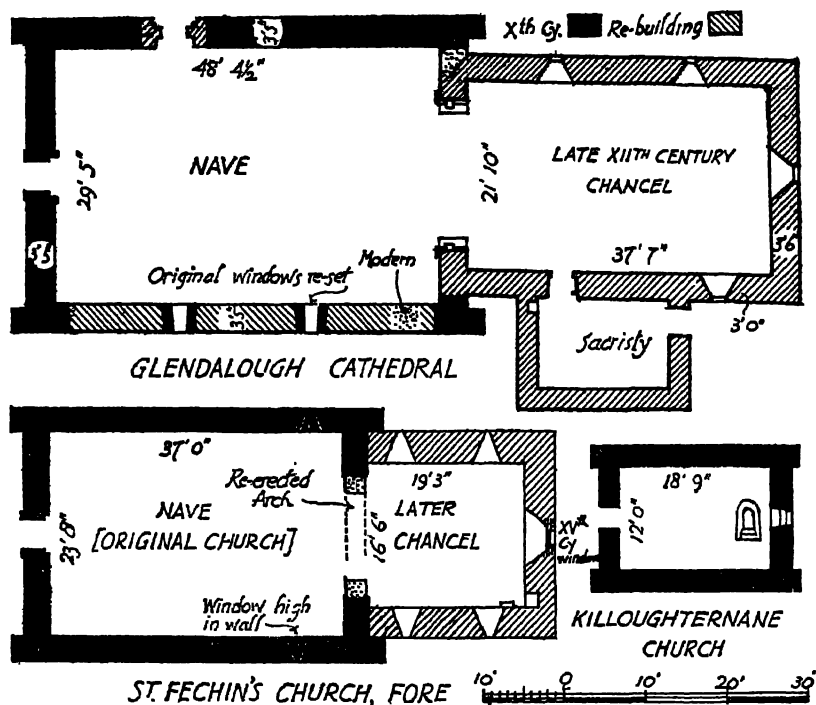
structure is probably rather later than the eighth century, the period to which it was assigned by the present writer some years ago.⁶



36. Liathmore, Tipperary Smaller Church

Very similar in dimensions to both the preceding examples of small churches with antae (it measures 20 feet by $13\frac{1}{2}$ feet inside) is that near ST. JOHN'S POINT, Down. No very large stones appear in its walls but its rather low, lintelled western doorway, and

the remains of a south window have jambs strongly converging towards the top. The east window had a triangular head formed of two slabs. Reputedly of seventh century date the structure is, more probably, later by a hundred years.⁷



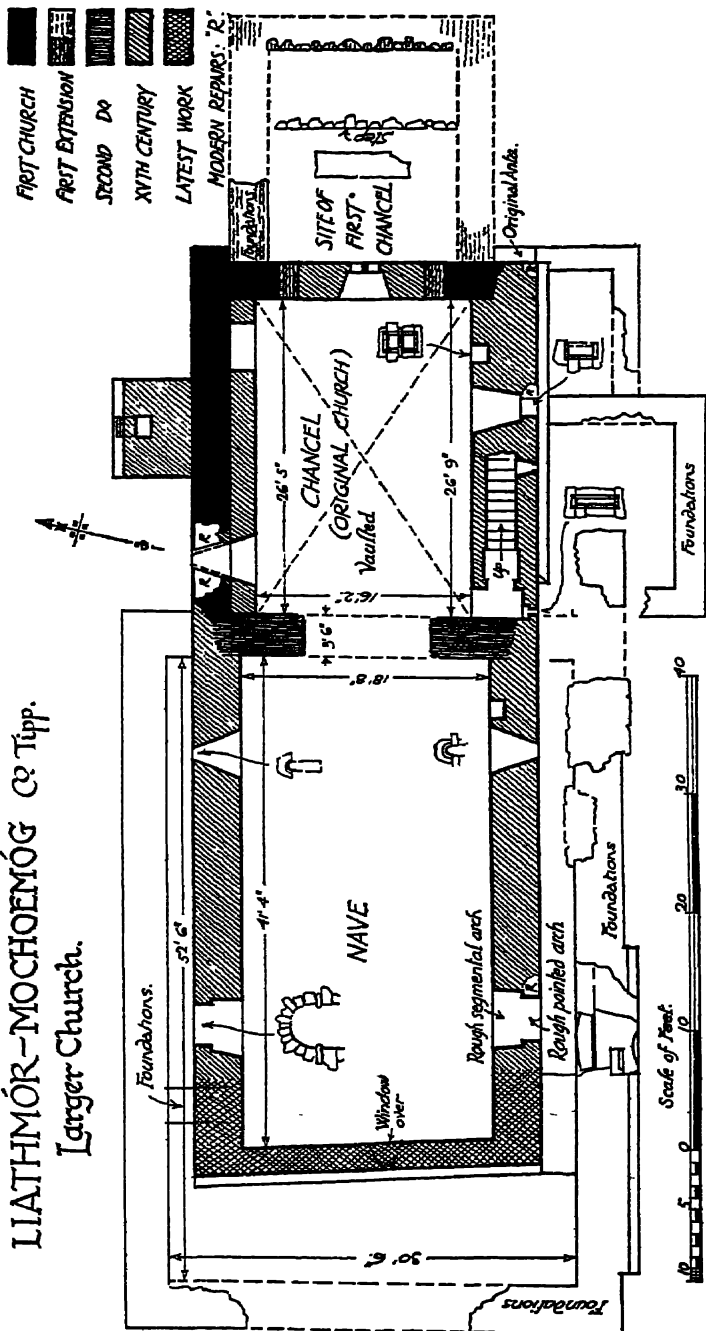
37. Plans of Churches with antae

2b. Larger Single-chamber Churches with Antae

These features persist into the twelfth century but the following buildings which possess them are of early date, one almost certainly of the mid-tenth century.

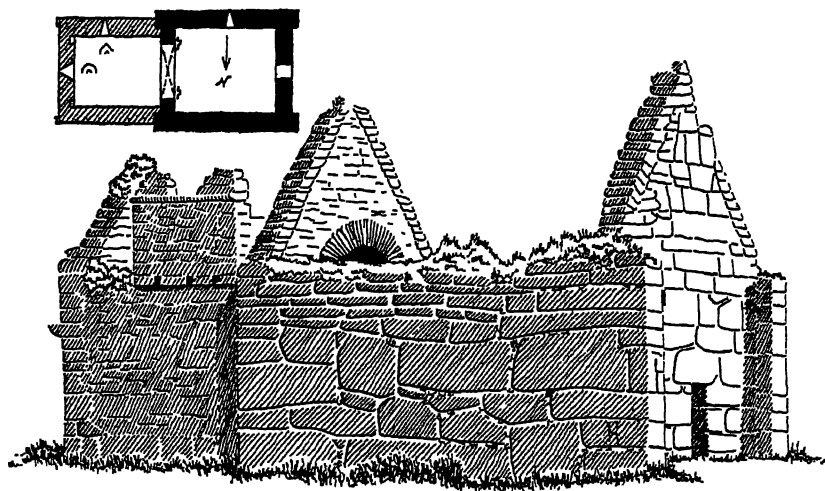
The chancel of the larger church at LIATHMORE-MOCHOEMOG (Leighmore), Tipperary (38), already mentioned—a building remarkable for the number of extensions and other changes it has undergone—was originally a single-chamber church

LIATHMÓR-MOCHOEMÓG & Tipp. Larger Church.



38. Liathmore, Tipperary Larger Church

with antae.⁸ These still remain, in whole or part, at the east end. Considerable fifteenth century changes disguise, but not completely, the fact that the building was originally 20 feet wide within, and at least 27 feet long: a length-breadth ratio of 1.3 to 1, which suggests a date earlier than that of the small church at the same place already dealt with.



39. Aran, Galway Teampull Macduach
(After Westropp)

TEAMPULL MACDUACH, on the larger island of Aran, Galway—Inishmore (39), has fine antae and masonry of the type commonly found in the west of Ireland: large, relatively thin slabs of limestone set on edge, giving an almost megalithic effect. The church has been extended by the addition of a chancel, fitted in between the eastern antae in this case, a quite usual proceeding. Apparently defensive additions of parapets to the wall-tops most probably belong to the fifteenth century but the chancel seems to be earlier than that period. The walls of the nave—the original church—are relatively thick and the internal dimensions of 18 feet 8 inches by 14 feet 6 inches give a proportion of roughly $1\frac{1}{4}$ to 1; somewhat shorter than the average. Another of the Aran churches, TEGLATH ENDA, also on Inishmore, has antae at the

east end and regular masonry of limestone blocks on edge. Its internal dimension ratio of length to breadth of 1.8 to 1 is greater than in any of the examples considered so far but this is almost certainly the result of a westwards extension of which there is evidence: the north window and north doorway, both round-headed, are later than the rest of the structure excepting the rebuilt south and west walls.

A simple church with masonry of the western type very similar to that in Teampull Macduagh is that at KILTIERNANE, Galway (25). Its original internal dimensions—it was extended eastwards in inferior masonry at some uncertain period—are 27 feet 3 inches by 14 feet 3 inches. The building has been regarded as the most ancient church in County Galway, perhaps because of the apparently large but actually thin stones used in its construction, but this is an undatable building custom. Conceivably, the church could belong to the eighth century but a date quite a century later, if not more, would be more acceptable. The internal length-breadth ratio of nearly 2 to 1 points in the same direction.

Antae occur in churches of early type far from the west coast. At DULANE, Meath, these features are massively constructed in harmony with the west doorway which is spanned by an unusually large lintel, 7 feet 6 inches long and nearly 2 feet in height. The inclination of the jambs is slight. Shallowly cut, merely etched, lines, suggesting an angle roll and fillets, on the jamb arrisses do not continue on the lintel. The building has not been accurately measured but appears to have been about twice as long as it is broad. The projecting features are also to be found at the west end of the church at AGHA, Carlow, which is built of roughly squared granite field-boulders and has a lintelled door. Though now three times as long as it is broad, one-third of the length is to be accounted for by an eastward extension; the original church was thus of about the same proportion as the County Meath structure.

The church dedicated to St. Begnet on DALKEY ISLAND, Dublin (Pl. II), has bold antae east and west. Its slightly battered walls of roughly dressed granite boulders, are nearly three

feet thick. Its interior dimensions (20 feet 4 inches by 13 feet 7 inches) give a plan proportion between 1.4 and 1.5 to 1. It, therefore, comes into the same general class as the others in this section but, in another respect it differs greatly from them and from most Irish churches of the early, simple form: its side walls are about 18 feet high, a dimension equal to the gable width. The gables are steep, as in most Irish churches, rising to an elevation of about 32 feet over ground level. The door is lintelled and its jambs converge very slightly. Relatively modern alterations have obliterated the east window and seem also to have affected the south window. A window high up in the same wall, near to the west end, indicates the presence of a priest's chamber (or, less probably, a gallery) on an upper floor in this part of the church. The much extended and altered church in the town of DALKEY had not only a very small north window—with a round head cut out of a single stone—but another window opposite. This is of curious form: a tall, narrow, flat-topped slit broadening inwards and divided, about mid-height, by a transom. Windows of this type are uncommon in early Irish buildings but there is some reason to believe that the south window in the island church was of the same type before its alteration.

The western two-thirds of the abbey church at INNISFALLEN, Kerry, has boldly projecting antae to its west front. Surviving in the south wall of the nave, which was extended eastwards and provided with a chancel in the thirteenth century, are the lower stones of the south-eastern anta. Making allowance for its projection and for the thickness of the vanished east wall the original internal length can be calculated. Apparently it was about 25 feet 9 inches. As the width is 17 feet 6 inches the length-breadth ratio would be just the often recurring average of $1\frac{1}{2}$ to 1. The church has a lintelled doorway (restored) in the west wall and appears to have been of the single-chamber type.

There are two ruined churches at COOLE, Cork, the larger still retaining three of its original antae, two to the east and the other at the north-west angle. All project 18 inches. The building

measures 33 feet by 21 feet inside and is, therefore, of almost exactly the average plan proportion. Judging by the pointed arch which leads to the chancel the latter addition seems to be of thirteenth century date, as also does the porch built at the south-west corner of the nave, obliterating the anta there. The fine, sandstone masonry of the church is so closely paralleled in that of the neighbouring church at BRITWAY (which also has antae) that both buildings may even be the work of the same masons.

The church of RATASS, near Tralee, Kerry, has thick walls and antae. In plan it is the usual short rectangle—about 1.6 to 1. Its fine doorway has inclined jambs and a very massive lintel. Wrought upon the few large jamb-stones and the lintel is a broad, flat architrave of slight projection. A very similar, but larger doorway with a broad architrave is that in TOMGRANEY church, Clare (c, 31), a building still in use. The eastern half is of the twelfth century, but there is good reason to believe that the western portion, to which the door gives entrance, is the church rebuilt by Abbot Cormac O Killeen who died in 969 A.D. If this assumption is correct—and it seems a reasonable one—we have a mid-tenth century date for a lintelled and architraved doorway. This doorway is wider than any others of the same type except those of St. Fechin's church at FORE, Westmeath (a, 31) and the cathedral at Glendalough (40).

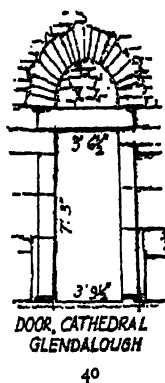
The former is particularly notable for the raised panel upon its lintel, above the architrave band. Carved in low relief in the centre of the panel is a circle inscribing a cross. The axis of this cross is slightly tilted from the vertical and the terminations of the cross arms are expanded. So remarkable is the likeness of the whole—and particularly of the cross-decorated lintel panel—to certain sixth century doorways in Syria, that "one is almost compelled to assume that someone present at its erection had seen Levantine examples."⁹ That the Arab conquest of Syria in the early seventh century caused a westwards migration of clerics, and the like, may be accepted as certain; that some of them may have reached Ireland eventually, bringing eastern architectural motives with

them, is not impossible. On the other hand the more probable ninth century date of the doorway has seemed less probable because the fury of the Northmen would be a deterrent to foreigners coming so far west at that time. From the former consideration a date in the third quarter of the seventh century has been assigned to the doorway at Fore and a date as late as the ninth century has been ruled out because of the second. But there are other factors to be taken into account: (a) the appearance of Syrian architectural features can only have been transmitted by memory or by sketches; (b) this granted, the derivatives may be much later—even by a hundred or more years—than the original; (c) despite the ravages of the Northmen in Ireland there was a period, from *c.* 875 to 916, when Ireland was sufficiently at peace to appear a welcome haven to clerics fleeing from the theological controversies which rent the Eastern Church at periods long subsequent to the Arab domination of Syria.¹⁰ It is interesting—and perhaps significant to this enquiry that within this very period the Irish annalists record the arrival and departure of one Analoen the Pilgrim, “with the epistle which had been given from Heaven at Jerusalem.”¹¹ Admittedly, the secure dating of Irish architraved doorways is not possible and even approximate datings are matters of opinion. But, taking into account the foregoing considerations and the reasonably secure mid-tenth century date for the Tomgraney doorway, so similar in form and dimensions to that at Fore, a late ninth century date for the latter is here assumed. St. Fechin’s church (b, 31) appears to have been of single-chamber type originally, measuring 37 feet by 27 feet 8 inches (1.56 to 1) and is thus of the short, broad proportion already met with in early churches. Its masonry and rather narrow antae are hardly in harmony with the splendid doorway and may be reconstructions. On the other hand, the locality may not have afforded large stones in sufficient quantity for the general walling.

Another extended and altered church is that at CLOONE or CLOONEAMERY, Kilkenny. It has antae at the west end only now, a lintelled and architraved doorway, with a cross in relief on the lintel (b, 31), and appears from masonry indications to have

been, originally, about 30 feet in internal length before its extension eastwards. As it is just 19 feet wide the length-breadth proportion is very close to the normal $1\frac{1}{2}$ to 1.

Much larger than any of the foregoing is the cathedral at Glendalough, Wicklow (Plan: a, 37). Its nave is the widest of any extant pre-Gothic church in Ireland, measuring just 30 feet across (incidentally, it may be noted that this is the net dimension, from pillar to pillar, of the nave of the thirteenth century cathedral of St. Patrick in Dublin) and has antae both east and west. The long dimension of just 48 feet gives a proportion of about 1.6 to 1. The church may have had a chancel from the first—a predecessor to that added in the late twelfth century and still standing. The evidence for an early chancel is the presence, built into the upper parts of the walls—in masonry of the second period—of half-drum-shaped stones almost certainly derived from the jambs of the original chancel opening. Apart from the antae, which are of considerable projection and widen inwards at the top—doubtless to form a broad base for heavy timber gable or barge trusses in advance of the wall-faces—the most interesting features are the masonry and the west doorway (40). The latter is almost as imposing as that at Fore but has a half-round relieving arch over the lintel. As for the masonry, this is of two kinds. The lower parts of the walls (for about 6 feet in height in the west wall and half that in the side walls) is of large, squared and well-fitted ashlar of mica-schist, very imposing in appearance. In reality this work belies its appearance: it is a relatively thin facing to a rubble core. Above these levels the masonry is rubble, well built and constructionally far sounder than the pseudo ashlar work below. Several periods of building (due to change of intention, or to interruption, or to reconstruction after one of the numerous recorded conflagrations) are obvious but it is impossible to decide anything about them except their relative order. The ashlar work represents the first period; the rubble above it the second. To the third main period belong the twelfth century chancel and the inserted north doorway. The two round-headed windows in the south wall are obviously



reconstructions in the second period rubble work. The Glendalough cathedral is considered by one conservatively minded writer¹² to belong to the tenth century, a view which seems quite acceptable.

The cathedral, at CLONMACNOISE, Offaly, is a single-chamber church with antae to both gable walls. Its length-breadth proportion of a little over 2 to 1 suggests that it may not be as early in date as any of the examples yet dealt with, despite its extreme simplicity of plan. Its earliest single feature, which, however, may be an insertion, is the late Romanesque west door. This will be treated of later, as will, also, its other unique feature—the six-bayed, vaulted chancel set up within the walls. The splendid north doorway, built by Dean Odo in the fifteenth century, must be mentioned but does not come within the scope of this volume.

The cathedral of St. Senán at SCATTERY, Clare, has antae at the west end and a lintelled doorway. The lower parts of this and some length of the side walls are in large masonry. The building has undergone such considerable change and extension that its original dimensions cannot now be defined.

At ARDPATRICK, Limerick, the surviving western antae of the church and the west wall are built in squared masonry of sandstone, similar in character to that of the remnant of a Round Tower which stands near the church.

2c. Examples of Early Churches without Antae

It was pointed out at the beginning of a previous section of this chapter that churches or oratories with antae are not necessarily earlier in date than others of the same plan type which lack these features. This, the simplest form of church, was doubtless once to be found all over the country but, to-day, the closest concentration is in the western counties—and particularly in the Aran Islands—where they have suffered the least change. All the examples to be cited possess in common lintelled doorways, round or triangular headed windows of the simplest form and plans of the short proportion. Some of them contain stones of large size.

The smallest is TEAMPULL BENEN, Inishmore, Aran (23). It is barely 11 feet in length and 7 feet wide inside (1.6 to 1) and has perfect walls 2 feet in thickness and slightly battered. The almost exact north and south orientation is very curious, indeed, unique. The "west" door, 5 feet 4½ inches high, has jambs strongly converging from 21 inches apart at the sill to 14 inches under the long lintel.

The sole window faces east, correctly, in the side wall near its south end. It is narrow (3½ inches externally); its round, inner and outer heads cut out of single stones. In the side walls, which are but 6½ feet in height outside, are some very large stones and the steep pitched gables rose (they are a little truncated now) to a height of 16½ feet over the ground level.

Another small church, much more rudely built than the last example, stands at KILLULTA, Limerick. It measures 16 feet by 10 feet inside, has walls nearly 3 feet thick, a plain doorway and a small, triangular-headed east window. There is no certainty about its date but it is reputed to be the oldest church in the county. This may well be the case.

KILGOBNET church, Inisheer, Aran, is not much larger than Teampull Benen on the larger island, but its lintelled door (c. 30) and its walls are constructed in less regular looking masonry. In internal length and breadth the church measures 12 feet 8 inches by 8 feet 6 inches and is thus another example of the average 1.5 to 1 ratio. The walls are 2 feet 8 inches thick.

A thinner walled church, very little larger inside (13 feet by 8½ feet) is KILL CEANNANAGH, Inishmaan, Aran. It has higher and more complete gables with corbels at the base; features which served the same *practical* purpose as antae: the support of gable or barge rafters. The lintelled doorway is low (4 feet 6 inches) and narrow (21 inches) and the very small east window has a triangular head.

A somewhat doubtful example is TEAMPULL COEMHAIN, Inisheer, Aran. It is almost buried in blown sand. According to one account¹³ the small chancel is coeval with the nave but, as the

admittedly inserted arch between them is pointed in form, the validity of this view is doubtful. The nave (16 feet by 12 feet: 1.33 to 1) is of the early short proportion and has a fine lintelled doorway.

In the Burren of north Clare, about seventeen miles east of the last example, is the small early church of simple form, **TERMON CHRONAIN**. Slightly larger than the island examples—measuring 21 feet 10 inches by 12 feet 10 inches (1.7 to 1)—it has the usual lintelled west doorway (built up) and a narrow east window with a round head. The inner embrasure of this opening is lintelled and has inclined jambs with some decorated stones in them. These probably indicate a reconstruction and the relatively long plan-proportion also suggests a date for this building rather later than that of the islands' churches. At the foot of the west gable are bold corbels carved on the undersides with animal masks (oxen?). A pointed doorway has been inserted in the south wall.

At **GLENDALOUGH**, Wicklow, St. Mary's church, which was outside the monastic cashel there and may well have been the church of a nunnery¹⁴ appears to have been a single-chamber church originally and of the usual short proportion (1.6 to 1 in this case). It has undergone some reconstruction and the addition of a chancel and north door in the twelfth century. The lower parts of its walls are composed of granite rubble (27) and a curious string-course slopes across the west wall at the base of the gable. Its most important feature is the well-known west door (14). It is over 6½ feet in height and has inclined jambs bordered by a narrow architrave. On the soffit of its lintel there is incised a three-line saltire cross with circular expansions at the centre and the ends of the arms (32).

South of the abbey ruins at **INNISFALLEN**, Kerry, are the remains of a small oratory, a plain building with an unadorned round-arched western doorway having inclined jambs. The internal dimensions of just 17 feet by 11 feet (1.54 to 1) show it to be an example of nearly the average length-breadth proportions. The building is probably earlier in date than the eastern oratory at the

same place which is a little larger and of slightly longer proportion. A decorated doorway and moulded east window proclaim this structure to belong to the full Romanesque, however, and its details will be dealt with later in these pages.

The western half of the cathedral of KILMACDUAGH, Galway, which has masonry not so much remarkable for the size of the stones used as for the ingenious fitting together of irregular blocks, represents the original church which may or may not have had a chancel. It is not possible to define its original length precisely, because of the later eastward extension, but 37 feet in length of the north wall remains. If this be about the length of the church, as seems probable, the internal breadth of 22 feet agrees with the ratio of about 1.7 to 1; not very different to that of Glendalough also considered to be a tenth century erection. The west doorway remains. It has inclining jambs and is lintelled but is in no way elaborated. Corbels at the foot of the original gable have been preserved in situ despite the later raising of the west wall above them.

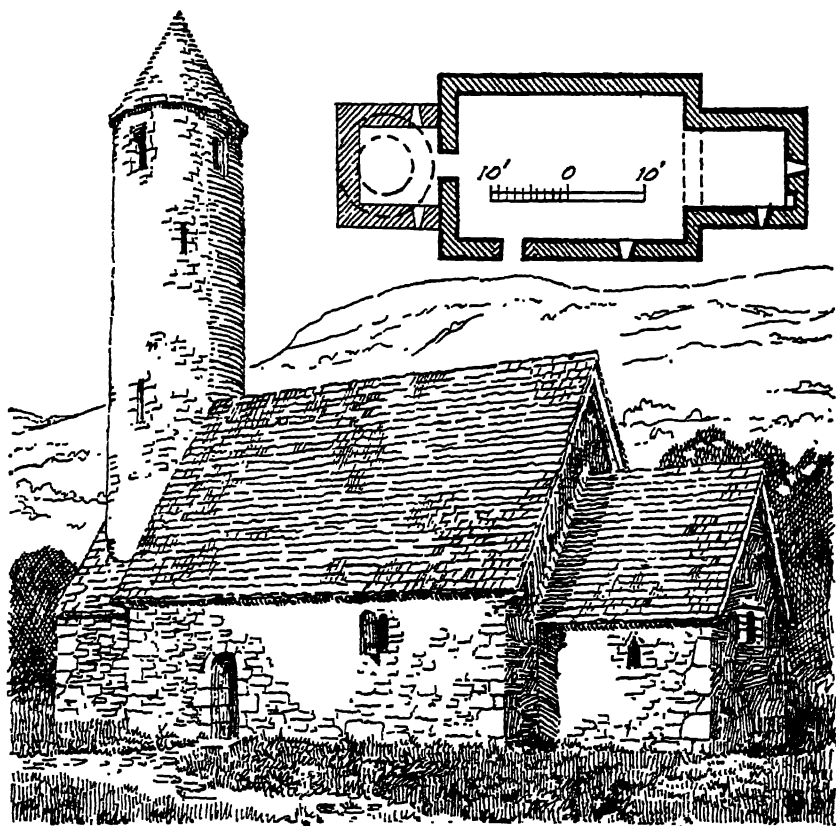
Low walls of a church with antae of small projection still stand at KILLEENEMER, Cork. Its doorway has a narrow, plain architrave. Though the building was extended eastwards the original limits are clearly defined and show that the internal length was a few inches over 27 feet and the width nearly 18 feet, giving a ratio of 1.64 to 1.

3. *EARLY CHURCHES WITH COEVAL NAVE AND CHANCEL*

To some of the single-chamber churches thus far dealt with chancels were added at some period subsequent to their erection; we are concerned in this section with early churches which, from the first, had chancels. The date of the first appearance in Ireland of this type of church is a matter of doubt. It has been argued¹⁵ that this was in the eleventh century at the earliest; that it may be a logical result of the reform movements which gained impetus about the beginning of the twelfth century. The same student assumes

a date of *c.* 1100 for the first two examples to be considered in this section: Trinity and Reefert churches at Glendalough, Wicklow. It is permissible to argue, on the other hand, that Glendalough cathedral—probably a tenth century building—had a chancel from the first (*supra* p. 71); that the great church at Kildare described by the thirteenth century Cogitosus had a definite division into nave and sanctuary, and that the distinction was known and practised in Saxon England as early as *c.* 700 (e.g. Escomb church). But it is not necessary to postulate an early and direct influence from England; it could have come in from the continent at a quite early time. Moreover, a steady increase in the population of the country may be presumed, bringing with it larger congregations and an increased necessity for marked differentiation between the space for the people and the sanctuary. It seems not unreasonable to assume that the earliest churches with coeval nave and chancel may belong to the tenth century, and that the addition of chancels to single-chamber churches has an equal antiquity.

No complete corpus of such churches has been compiled as yet. But the two Glendalough examples mentioned may well, in their very simplicity, be among the earliest in the country and be datable to the tenth century. TRINITY (41) and REEFERT churches are identical in form and almost so in dimensions (Reefert: nave, 29 feet 1 inch by 17 feet 3 inches; chancel, 13 feet by 7 feet 11 inches. Trinity: nave, 29 feet 6 inches by 17 feet 5 inches (average); chancel, 13 feet 6 inches by 9 feet). It will be noted that the plan proportions of the naves—about 1.7 to 1—are but little longer than the normal for early, single-chamber churches. In both buildings there is a round arch of well-cut granite and of the exact width of the chancel; a lintelled door in the west wall and simple round-headed windows, of a single stone, externally and, in one case, internally also. Trinity church has, in addition, a small triangular-headed window (33c) in the south wall of the chancel. Both buildings have the corbels or brackets (29) at the gable bases which are a feature of most early churches lacking antae. The jambs of the west door at Reefert appear to be a re-assemblage of



41. Glendalough, Wicklow Conjectural restoration of Trinity Church

architrave stones but the west doorway of Trinity is plain and unaltered. Covering it is a western annexe—approached only from the church—which was once corbel-roofed in stone and supported a Round-Tower-like belfry. The illustration (41) is a conjectural restoration of the church. When this western annexe was built a round-headed doorway was inserted in the south wall of the nave.

What must surely be the smallest nave and chancel church extant is that known as ST. KIERAN'S, also at Glendalough. It has a nave measuring nearly 19 feet by 14½ feet (1.3 to 1) and a chancel approximately 9 feet square. As only the lower parts of the walls remain the form of the openings is uncertain but the

discovery within the walls—during the excavation of the church—of the round head of a window, indicates that at least one window was of that simple form.

1. Henry: *Irish Art*, London (1940), pp. 25-27.
2. Macalister: *Ancient Ireland*, London (1935); *Climatic-curve*, p. 278, based on Brooks; *Climate through the Ages*.
3. Macalister: "The Memorial Slabs of Clonmacnoise," extra volume *R.S.A.I.*, Dublin (1909), pp. 141-2.
4. *Ancient Monuments of Northern Ireland* (H.M.S.O.) Belfast (1912) pp. 17 and 49.
5. Leask and Macalister: *P.R.I.A.*, LI, C, No. 1 (1946), p. 8.
6. Leask, *J.R.S.A.I.*, Vol. 73 (1943), pp. 88-100.
7. *Anc. Monuments of Northern Ireland*, H.M.S.O. Belfast (1928), and information from Mr. D. M. Waterman.
8. Macalister and Leask: *ibid.*
9. Rae: Thesis quoted, unpublished.
10. Rae: Thesis, *ibid.*
11. *Annals F.M. and A.U.*, 886.
12. Clapham: *Archl. Jr.*, Vol. XVI, Supplement (1952), p. 16.
13. Westropp: *R.S.A.I. Antiq. Handbook*, No. VI, p. 92.
14. Price: *Feilsgribhinn Eoin Mhic Neill* (Dublin). *Official Guide*, Commissioners of Public Works, 1950, p. 15.
15. Rae: *ibid.*

Chapter VIII

THE IRISH ROMANESQUE

I. GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS AND DATING

THE term Romanesque, in its architectural application, may be defined, in a broad and general way, as comprising all those phases of European architecture which were based, more or less, upon Roman art, and were in vogue in Italy and north and west thereof from about 600 to 1200 A.D. The style, prevalent as it was, took on a different complexion in each of the provinces of the disintegrated empire and the lands beyond. Italian, French, Spanish, German and English (that is Saxon and Norman) Romanesques have marked individual characteristics; so also has the Irish variant despite its family likeness to and parallelism with the coeval Romanesques of Normandy and Britain. It is the most original and truly national of Irish Architectural achievements.

In one respect even the plain and humble Irish buildings so far discussed are Romanesque in that most possess one or more round-headed openings: the Roman arch in its simplest form; the feature common to the style wherever it was practised. These simple erections undoubtedly derive from the master style; they are humble members of the same great family, but in the following pages the more usual and narrower application will be given to "Romanesque"; it will be used in respect only of architecture more or less embellished with carved ornament.

Few of the extant remains can be dated with any certainty; historical references are few in number and are not altogether conclusive. Moreover, perusal of Irish history as recorded by the annalists reveals no long periods of peace in which there might

spring up an elaborate and finished architectural art. The state of church affairs in the twelfth century seems to have been no more favourable to such a growth, if we may judge from St. Malachy's strictures upon the church and people of his native land, but it seems likely that, in this particular connexion, the saint was concerned more with the Irish church's lack of organization—its tenuous connexion with the central authority at Rome—than with really grave moral defects in its body. However this may be the churchmen and their masons must have enjoyed a high degree of immunity from the consequences of the dynastic quarrels, invasions and battles which fill the annals. That a state of civil strife did not necessarily or always affect church affairs may be inferred from a consideration of a period in English history in the same century: the reign of King Stephen. Those twenty years (1135 to 1154) were full of turmoil and civil distress yet they saw the foundation of great abbeys in the land and the beginnings of their buildings. Indeed, when this civil war was at its height (c. 1140-45) and in one of the most disturbed areas (Herefordshire), the remarkable, highly-decorated small churches at Shobdon and Kilpeck were erected.¹

With little help from historical records the task of dating Irish works of any period, and not least those of the Romanesque, is difficult. It is no matter for wonder that for over a hundred years past the dating of Irish buildings of all the early periods has been matter for controversy. While there is agreement now that the most highly decorated of the buildings in the style belong mainly to the third quarter of the twelfth century, the date when the Irish mason-artists first began to embellish their buildings with carved ornament is in doubt. It is still very much a matter of opinion and that here advanced is conservative in character. It is that the later ten-hundreds—the eleventh century—saw the first attempts at ornamental elaboration of structural features. This gives for the full Romanesque in Ireland a span of a hundred years or thereabouts, from early development to climax, a generous allowance for an architectural style so remarkably homogeneous in character,

and exhibiting few or very marked changes in fashion. Moreover, it is paralleled in neighbouring Britain where the sister "Norman" Romanesque style shows much the same development from simplicity to elaboration in about the same period of time.

All extant early Irish churches are small in size in comparison with those of the Continent or even coeval parish churches in Britain. The Irish Romanesque churches, though often larger than those of the preceding period, are no exception. It was not in the size of his buildings nor in the development of new structural methods that the Irish mason-artist of the twelfth century excelled; it was in the concentration of ornamental design upon certain features of the otherwise simple and never very large structures which he raised. Few remain complete but a wealth of decorated doorways and arches more or less intact still survives.

Two notable characteristics of the Irish style are inherited from the earlier work: the battered wall and the related convergence of the sides of door and window openings. The antae also continue in use. The ornament of the style is generally delicate, in low relief and superficial, enveloping the architectural features of pillar, capital and arch-stone without—in the most characteristic works—interference with or interruption of the purposeful architectural line of pillar or curve of arch. Column capitals are of small projection and deep, frieze-like form; pillars are often barely expressed by a rounding of the angles of piers of square plan; bases, too, are of small projection and frequently not unlike capital design-forms inverted. The ornamental motives are derived from various sources: from the vocabulary of Celtic art come the interlacements; from that of Greece and Rome, by way of many intermediate steps the palmette and fret and some foliage and floral patterns; the chevron, so much used, is common to all north-western Europe, while Scandinavia provided the animal style of birds and beasts to enrich the interlaces.

As has been said already the dating of Irish Romanesque buildings is difficult mainly because of paucity of record, and is controversial. There are but three recorded building-dates which

can be accepted with a high degree of certainty. They are the dedication of Cormac's Chapel on St. Patrick's Rock at Cashel in 1134; the completion—probably the rebuilding—of the Nuns' Church at Clonmacnoise in 1166, and the building of the great church at Aghadoe in 1158.² The first date is less useful than might be expected since, in many respects, the Chapel is an exotic work which seems to have exerted little effect upon the native style. The second shows that about that time a degree of over-elaboration at the cost of the interruption of the architectural line had made its appearance, and the third date reinforces the same view. It is, none the less, possible to adumbrate a scheme or plan of architectural development from simple, not highly adorned, work to that elaborately decorated, and beyond this again to over-elaboration, and to make the general assumption that this progression has chronological significance. In other words, that the simplest work is, in most cases, the earliest in date; that the highest development of ornament belongs to the middle period and that over-elaboration, as above defined, indicates a later date. With some exceptions, which will be mentioned in their proper place later, this is the scheme adopted in these pages.

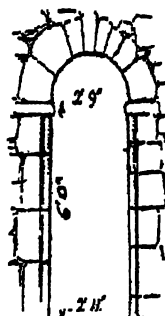
This generalized scheme must be qualified in one respect; the lack of mouldings or carved work to such features as chancel arches does not in all cases denote early dating. There are, for instance, some churches, mainly in the limestone districts of the west, which have well-wrought, round chancel arches of square section, rising from similar jambs capped with plain or chamfered impost mouldings which, in their very simplicity, suggest dates as early as the tenth century. While this date may be applicable to the main structure of the churches, most of the arches mentioned seem to be insertions and comparable in date to other inserted features. Examples are the larger church at OUGHTMAMA and that at NOUGHAVAL, both in County Clare. The first-mentioned arch is certainly an insertion in older walls remarkable for massive masonry (26). It has been attributed to *c.* 1000 A.D.³ which may well be the date of the walls and the lintelled west doorway, but the

archway can hardly be earlier than c. 1150.⁴ The Noughaval arch appears to be no older than the windows of the church—insertions—which are of late twelfth century type. Very similar to the Oughtmama arch is that in the small church at INCHBOFIN, Lough Ree, which, on other counts, appears to belong to the late twelfth or early thirteenth century, and another arch at KILSHEELAN, Tipperary, an insertion in a building in which there is also inserted a late twelfth century doorway, simply moulded. St. Colman's Cathedral at Kilmacduagh, County Galway, has a chancel arch very much of the Oughtmama type and so has the church at Dysert O'Dea, County Clare. The County Galway arch has been attributed to so late a date as the seventeenth century⁵ which, though improbable, shows how misleading simplicity can be. Both examples are more likely to be of c. 1200.

There are church doorways very similar to the arches discussed above: at MYSHALL, Carlow (42) and SHEEPSTOWN, Kilkenny. They have inclined jambs—with angle rolls to the former—and impost mouldings. In appearance they are more archaic than the Clare examples or that at Kilsheelan and can be attributed to the eleventh or—at latest—the twelfth century.

Before proceeding to the discussion of the churches of the full Romanesque—round-arched throughout—some others which seem to belong to an intermediate stage or style have to be considered; those in which the main doorway is still of the lintelled form externally, and framed by an architrave, while at the back of the lintel a round arch spans the door embrasure.

Three principal examples of these portals remain; there were almost certainly a greater number in the past. First in order, and perhaps the earliest because of its plain, unadorned character, is the west door of the ruined church at BANAGHER in County Derry. The greatly inclined jambs (over 18 inches wide on the face) of its opening support a lintel stone of unusual height and nearly six feet in length. Framing in this and the jambs is a bold architrave—square, with arris rolls—but graced with a narrow roll-moulding which fills the inner re-entrant angles. Though the design



MYSHALL OLD CHURCH

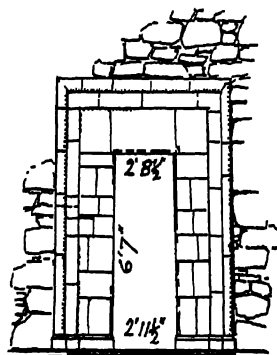
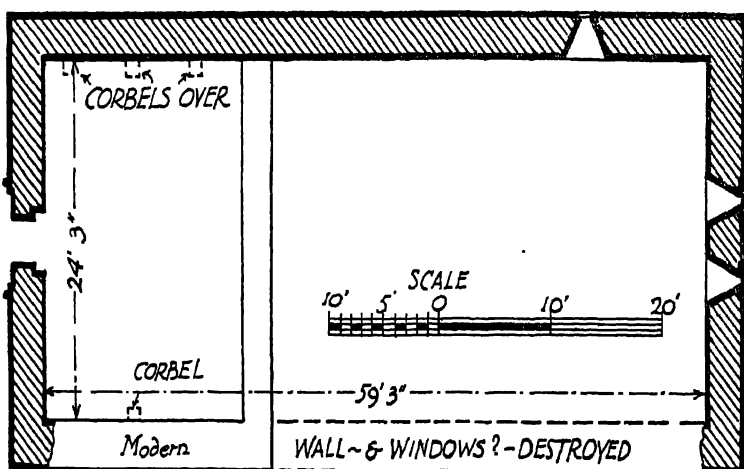
42. Myshall,
Carlow, W. door
of Church



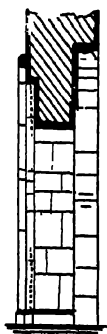
BANAGHER CH. WINDOW
IN NAVE (Not to scale)
(It is also at CAHAN ABB.)

43

is of the simplest the whole effect is impressive and dignified. In the south wall of the nave to which this doorway leads is a small round-headed window of a date coeval with walls and doorway (43). It is bordered all round by a bold architrave of square section. That door and window belong together is plain; the date of both is matter of controversy. (A very similar window is to be seen at Cahan, in the same county.) It has been argued⁶ that the origins of this type of architraved door and window design are to be sought in sixth-century buildings in central Syria—finely illustrated in



WEST DOORWAY



EAST WINDOWS



SCALE FOR DOORWAY

De Vogue's monumental work⁷ and that, therefore, the Banagher doorway must be of the seventh or eighth century at the latest. The Irish doorways, however, Banagher and others to be mentioned later, lack the most distinctive feature of the Syrian exemplars relied on: the boldly projecting—even clumsy—and often highly carved cornice mouldings which crown them. This feature could not have failed to impress any observer and its absence from the Irish door with architraves seems a strong argument against the Syrian origin. As for the architrave surround it is common to the whole Roman world and could have been observed by the Irish pilgrim or itinerant cleric in places much nearer home than the Levant.

The second of these remarkable doorways is that in AGHOWLE church (44), Wicklow. Of this structure, which is an unusually long, relatively narrow, high-walled and gabled building, the east, north and west walls remain, and all appear to be of the same date. In the east wall are two very small, round-headed windows splaying widely inwards in the usual fashion. Each is set in a shallow external casement. They are in one respect unique in Irish building; in being each flanked externally by little columns, projecting from the wall-face and supported by small corbels, two in the form of animal heads. These pillars carry projecting archivolts, the voussoirs of which bear much-worn chevron ornaments. This fact is significant, for the first appearance of the chevron in north-western European architecture seems to be datable to about the year 1100.⁸ The Aghowle doorway, lintelled without and arched within as is that at Banagher, bears a strong resemblance to the northern example. It, too, is framed by a strong architrave but the feature is double, or rather "double-faced" in building terminology. The outer member is rounded in section; the inner square and decorated on the inner returns with a line of small carved bosses or large beads, while the arrisses of the jambs have a small bead or "quirk" moulding. These elaborations, slight though they be, permit it to be argued that the Aghowle doorway, datable, perhaps, to 1100, is later in date than that at Banagher.

Much more elaborately adorned is the third of these square-headed and architraved doors: that at MAGHERA, Derry (Pl. IIIa). Carvings cover all the stonework: architrave, jamb faces and lintel. The latter is a splendid object. It is five and a half feet in length and over two feet in height; its whole face covered with a Crucifixion scene. Upon the widely, indeed disproportionately extended arms of the Cross perch small angelic figures and beneath crouch the spear- and sponge-bearers, flanked on the left by five standing figures and on the right by six more. The two thieves are shown behind the arms of the Cross. A minor architrave, in low relief and carved with delicate foliage interlace, borders the opening and extends across the lintel-face beneath the figure sculpture and to right and left to meet the bold outer architrave. All the jamb-stones which remain within the latter are enriched with superficial decoration, while the outer architrave itself is of square section with narrow roll mouldings at each angle. Its faces and returns are also carved. Strong arguments have been advanced⁸ in support of a ninth or tenth century date for this most remarkable work of art. The grounds adduced are mainly iconographic: the narrative style of the Crucifixion scene, the robed or skirted Christ, etc.; similarity to the eighth century Wurtzburg MSS. The repetition of some of the motives found on the eighth century Northumbrian cross of Bewcastle is another point made in the argument for an early date, as is also the absence of animal forms from the interlace ornament. It has been shown, on the other hand,⁹ that a Roman fresco of the tenth century in the House of Martyrs at Rome—which might have easily been seen by Irishmen—bears a remarkable resemblance to the Maghera crucifixion and that the Bewcastle Cross square-diaper ornament is found elsewhere, in objects and architecture of much later date than the Northumbrian cross. It should be noted, too, that some foliage patterns occurring at Maghera do not differ greatly from similar motives used in the undoubtedly twelfth century doorway of Clonfert Cathedral, Galway, the triumph of the Irish Romanesque. The arguments on both sides are difficult to summarize and cannot be discussed in

detail here. If the Maghera doorway is of the ninth or tenth century is is a most remarkable object, standing in isolation, without successors until the Romanesque reached its finest flowering. The probability is that it belongs rather to a date not much before the year 1100.

2. PHASES OF THE ROMANESQUE

The broad outline of stylistic development in Irish buildings in the Romanesque style—from simplicity to elaboration—has already been stated. It remains, as a preliminary to the discussion in detail of the extant examples, to indicate the plan of grouping or phasing adopted in the following pages. This plan may not be entirely valid for every case and it cannot be definitive as to dating, but it has the virtue of convenience and coherence and is chosen in the belief that it also possesses chronological significance.

The extant buildings, or remnants of them, are placed in three main groups, each representing a phase of development according to the structural forms and decorative details of their important features—doorways, arches, windows—which are sometimes all that survive. In each case hypotheses of time limits for the duration of the phase are suggested.

In the first group—to be called Phase 1—are gathered those examples in which only the bases and capitals of piers and pillars are elaborated by moulding or carving; while the arch rings are quite plain and the supports themselves either no more than wrought into engaged-columns and colonettes by shallow cutting, or into bolder but still plain forms. These examples appear to be the earliest and datable to the end of the eleventh century or the first decades of that following.

The numerous examples which are most typical of the native style are grouped in Phase 2, but under two headings. Under the first are those in which decoration has spread to the arches and but tentatively to the supporting piers which, however, retain the shallow working of the first phase; and in the second are those in which the decoration has boldly invaded the piers and pillars. The

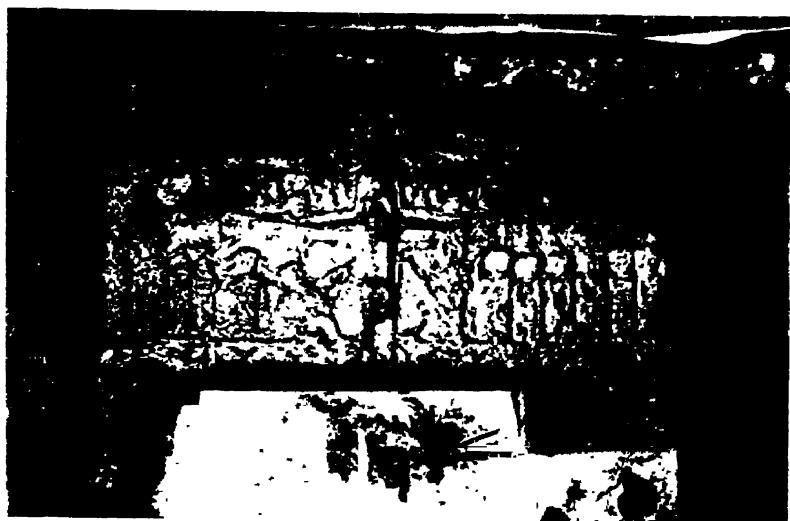
culmination is reached in the veil of enrichment which covers every surface of the master-work in the style: the doorway of Clonfert Cathedral. This phase seems to have run its full course in the forty or fifty years between c. 1120 and c. 1165.

There is, however, one very important structure which does not fit into Phase 2 as defined: the unique Chapel of King Cormac at Cashel. It stands almost alone stylistically, though a very few buildings derive from it in some degree; none the less its date is known and its consideration cannot be either advanced or deferred without causing some chronological confusion. It and its derivatives are, therefore, interpolated between the earlier and later sections of the second phase.

In the final grouping—here designated Phase 3—are those Irish buildings in the style which are notable not merely for great elaboration, but for a degree of richness of decoration which has been obtained only at the expense of the architectural purity of the lines of support and arch. This tendency makes its appearance in arches as early as the 1160's and—in this writer's view—is a symptom of relative lateness in date. In the latest stage of Phase 3, however, must be placed examples which give evidence of a return to relative austerity and the beginnings of the transition to the advancing Gothic style. The *terminus post quem* of the last phase is not known with certainty but it may have persisted (in places remote from the places of entry of the Gothic style) as late as the end of the century.

3. IRISH ROMANESQUE PHASE ONE

The early phase of the full Romanesque—that in which plain, square-sectioned arches are borne by plain shafts or colonetted jambs, but with the full complement of ornamented base, capital and abacus is not represented by many examples. Foremost amongst these is the chancel archway of the larger church—still in use—at RAHAN, Offaly (45). This small but impressive portal is in three orders. The arches are square in section and quite undecorated but the jambs—the piers from which they rise—with



IIIa MAGHERA, DERRY

Lintel

(see p. 86)



IIIb INCHBOFIN, WESTMEATH

Window

(see p. 100)

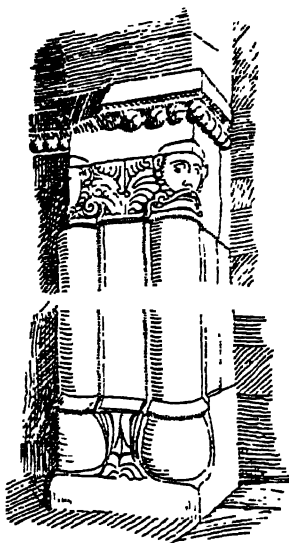


IVa GLENDALOUGH, WICKLOW
The Priory Church Interior, looking east
(see p. 96)



IVb GLENDALOUGH, WICKLOW
Capital at south side of Chancel Arch
in Priory
(see p. 96)

their bases and capitals, exhibit treatment and features which are to become characteristic of the Irish style.

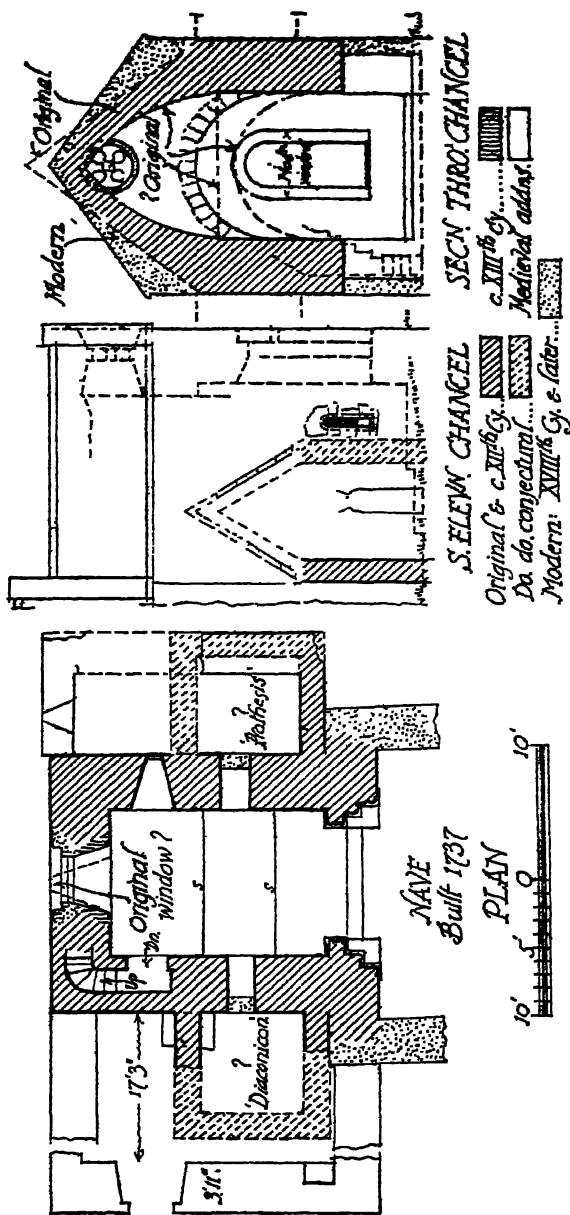


45. Rahans, Offaly Capital and Base
(Leach : *N. Mun. Antiq. Jl.*)

The piers are square in plan but shallowly wrought at each angle into engaged colonnettes, bounded by narrow fillets of angular section. As will be seen this shallow modelling was favoured by the Irish masons even in a later phase of the style. The base-blocks of the piers, as in many other examples, project very little. Worked upon them are the curious, bulbous bases of the colonnettes, with small, angular upper members. Between the bases the space is filled with a low-relief carving of much stylized foliage (cf. capitals at St. Caimin's church, Iniscealtra, *infra*). The capitals, some of which have suffered defacement, are, like the base-blocks, deep, square, frieze-like and of very slight projection. They, also, exhibit features found again and again in later Irish work; human faces or masks carved at the angles and united by enrichment of various kinds. The motive in this case is the palmette, with a suggestion of the Greek anthemion or honeysuckle (69, *infra*). The relief of the

carving of both masks and palmette is low, in the latter hardly more than etching. Above the capitals is the one bold feature, an abacus of several inches projection. On the face this abacus is square above a row of very small pearls or pellets in false relief, and the chamfered lower face is decorated with bold, bud-like bosses. The Rahan archway has been assigned¹⁰ to a very early date, the seventh or eighth century, on the grounds of the classicism of the palmette motive and the curious bulbous form of the colonette bases. Something very like this last, accompanied by shallow engaged shafts, appears in the chapel of the palace of Ani in Armenia, and datable, it is said, to the early seventh century at the latest. Since Armenian clerics dwelt for a time not very far away from Rahan in the seventh or eighth century, the importation of these motives is attributed directly to them and to that period. Other writers on the Romanesque find the arguments advanced for this early dating untenable¹¹ and in this examination of the subject it is not accepted. But that Rahan is an early, perhaps the earliest example of decorated Romanesque in Ireland can hardly be doubted and a date not long before or after 1100 seems to fit it very well.

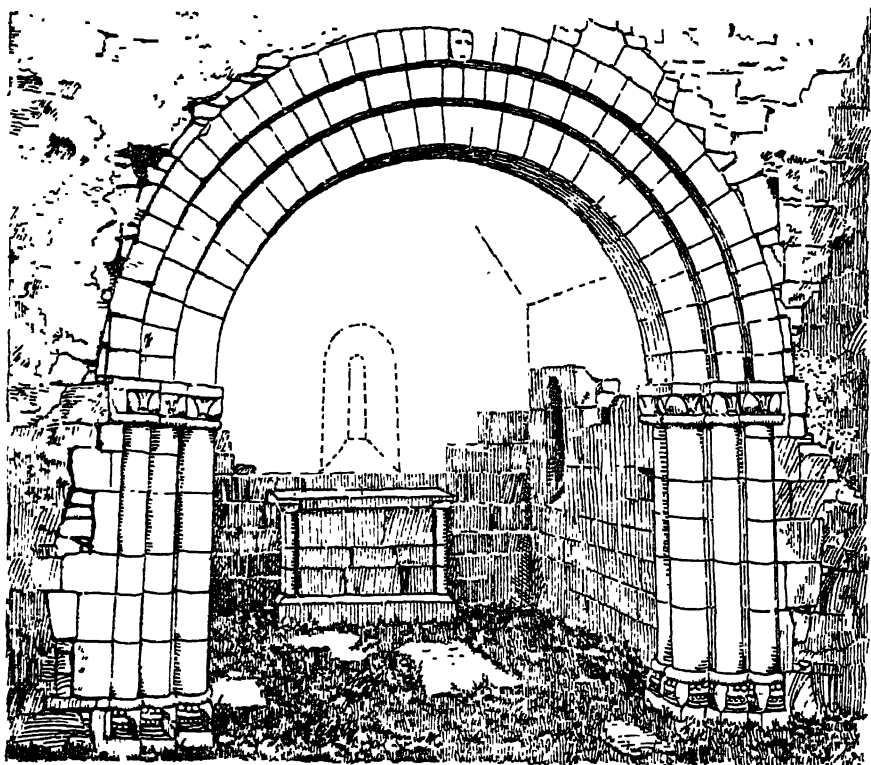
The plan of Rahan (46) presents features unique among Irish churches. It originally had two small chambers flanking the chancel to north and south, and entered from it through two small, round-headed doorways with inclined jambs. Arches and jambs are of excellent workmanship. These little rooms may be the *porticus* known in the Eastern Church as the *Diaconicon* and *Prothesis*; the first for use of the clergy as a sacristy, and the second to receive the offerings of the faithful. They were also features of churches of the fifth and sixth centuries in Syria and North Africa and, though not represented in Italy at that period or later, they appear, curiously, in some English churches built in the seventh century.¹² Except for the Rahan examples these features are unknown—or, perhaps, have not survived—in Ireland. An argument against the use, specifically, for the purposes the names imply is that at Rahan the entrance to the *prothesis* is from the chancel instead of from the



46. Rahau, Offaly Plan and section, etc., of eastern part of larger church

nave, as it should be and as it appears in the English and foreign examples which have been laid bare by excavation.

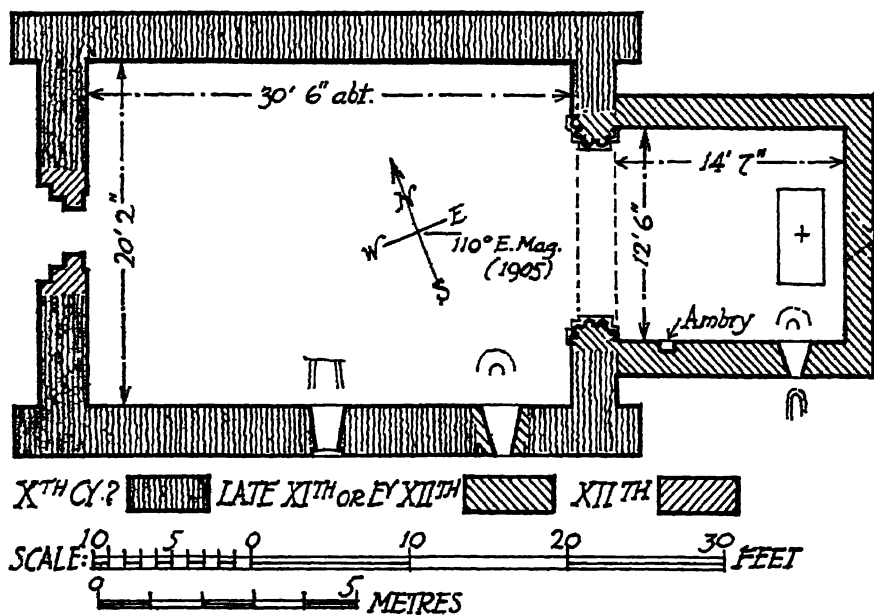
Small projection of such features as bases and capitals, combined with decoration in low relief and shallowly wrought colonettes, are persistent characteristics of the Irish style for quite half a century of its vogue; but there are exceptions in what is regarded, in this study, as the first phase of the style.



47. Iniscealtra, Clare Chancel Arch of St. Caimin's Church

One such exception is the chancel archway (47, 48) of the church of ST. CAIMIN at INISCEALTRA (Holy Island, Lough Derg, County Clare) where the three arch rings are quite unadorned, but the converging jambs supporting them are bold full, half- and three-quarter columns. Moreover, the capitals and bases project

unusually though still less strongly than in the "Norman" architecture of Britain or the earlier "Saxon" Romanesque. The bases are made up of rolls of varied breadths alternating with rows of bosses or beads, large and small. There are leaf-form spurs at the angles, and between the twin half-columns, and the capitals, too, have broad, ovoid leaves as their main features, with much stylized leaf-forms between them, very like the bases at Rahan. This curious type of capital, for which it is difficult to find a satisfactory origin or name—the leaf, indeed, may be a crude memory of the egg-and-dart motive of Roman architecture—is found in a few other Irish buildings. It occurs also in Clonkeen church (70) and Aghadoe "Cathedral," respectively in the counties of Limerick and Kerry (85).



48. Iniscealtra, Clare Plan of St. Caimin's Church

The erection of St. Caimin's Church is credited to King Brian Boru and c. 1000. The tradition may well be correct as regards the main body of the structure (Plan, 48) but does not help to a definitive dating for the arch, since this impressive object and the

chancel to which it leads are additions to the original work. Also an insertion in the church structure is the chevron-ornamented west door; it has obviously been built in a gap the shape of which suggests that the original doorway was a lintelled one, probably not unlike that architraved opening surviving at the west end of Tomgraney church and put up in the mid-tenth century. The very simplicity of the whole design of the chancel archway places it in the first phase of the Irish style which, in this writer's view, is datable to round about, plus or minus, the year 1100, and the first decades of the twelfth century.

4. *IRISH ROMANESQUE PHASE TWO*

The buildings or extant remnants next to be dealt with are those which display more of the characteristics typical of Irish Romanesque than of those found in the style in other countries. This second phase of the Irish style is, therefore, the most important and comprises the most interesting structures. The buildings have certain features in common, though in points of decorative detail they often vary a good deal, but not always in ways from which a coherent progressive development can be deduced, or relative datings be arrived at. Were even a few dates well documented and definite this task would be less difficult, but the only such date in the half century is that of the dedication of Cormac's chapel at Cashel. This structure, as will be shown later, does not help the solution of the problems of dating because of its exotic character and because the buildings which apparently derive from it in some degree are so few in number. Hypothetically, the second phase covers the first half of the twelfth century with an overlap into the two following decades for the obviously most advanced buildings. No attempt is made to place other individual structures earlier or later than the remarkable work on St. Patrick's Rock at Cashel though it is recognized as possible—even highly probable—that the simpler examples precede it.

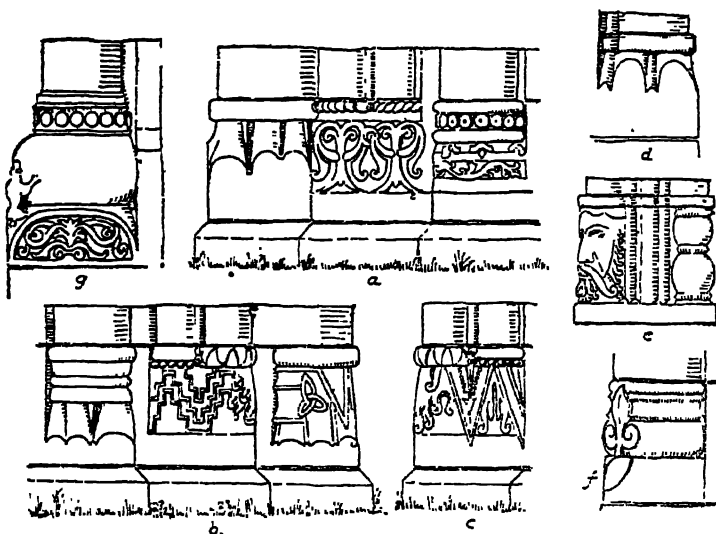
Apart from the inclination of walls and jambs of openings—a very persistent Irish masonic tradition, operating long before and

after the period under review—there are three main characteristics of the phase: (a) jamb-piers of square plan shallowly wrought into colonettes at the angles, as at Rahan, or into rolls of lesser breadth; (b) capitals, often so deep as to appear like friezes, with masks at the angles and not breaking the architectural lines and ornamented with interlaces; (c) chevron ornamentation, usually in low relief and not breaking the architectural lines, to arch-stones.

But common to all phases of the style, and to be found in half of the extant arches except the earliest, is the use of this stock Romanesque motive in arch rings in what has been called the ribbon moulding, i.e., with the apices of the zig-zag pointing towards and away from the spectator; the face of each voussoir being chevron-shaped. The invasion of the jambs and pillars (particularly of full or engaged pillars) by surface ornament, culminating in the amazing overall decoration of the doorway of Clonfert cathedral, is to be regarded as almost the only acceptable sign of progression, and the buildings in which it attains full development must be placed latest in the phase and, probably in the two decades following 1150.

The chevron zig-zag is the stock ornament of the Romanesque of north-west Europe and is found in greatest profusion in Normandy, Britain and Ireland. According to Viollet-le-Duc¹³ it appears in the architecture of Normandy in the eleventh century. But he does not cite dated examples. It is certain that it does not appear in datable buildings in Britain, the land which furnishes the greatest number of examples of its use, before c. 1100. It is true that there is a chevron-ornamented arch, on a very small scale, on the object known as the Franks Casket, preserved in the British Museum, a Northumbrian work of c. 700, but in Saxon architecture the motive does not appear at all. The saw-tooth—*dent-de-scie*—triangular notching of such features as string-courses in early French architecture is, of course, the zig-zag or chevron in miniature. This may well be derived from the notching of edges of timber as a decoration and it is not improbable that the chevron may have a timber-work origin. It does not seem possible that it is an Irish invention exported to Britain to be used so prolifically there as it

is in the twelfth century; rather the reverse seems to be the case and, therefore, a date before 1100 for its appearance in Ireland is not acceptable.



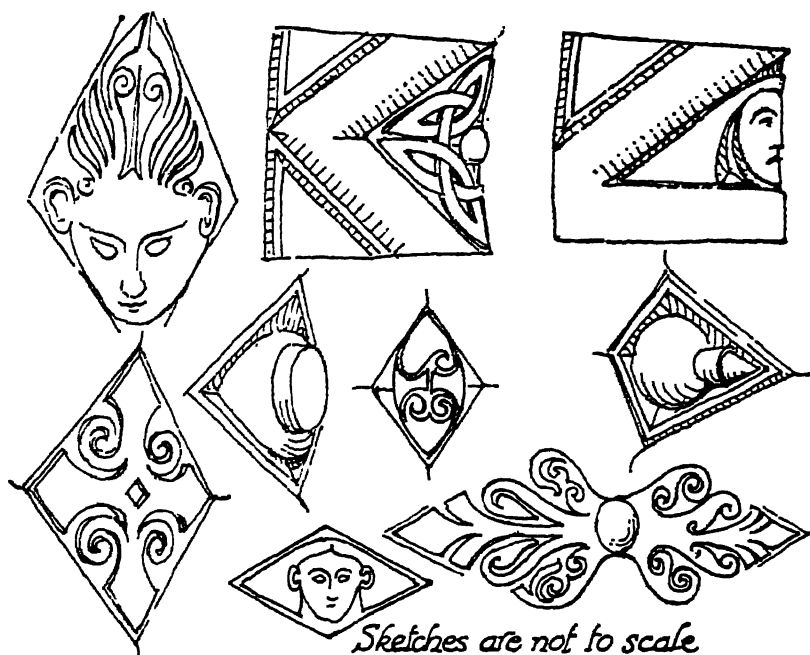
49. Twelfth-century Bases

(a), (b), (c) and (d), Glendalough, Wicklow, St. Saviour's; (e) Timahoe, Leix; Round Tower; (f) Rahau, Offaly; Small church; (g) Baltinglass Abbey, Wicklow

(Leask : *North Munster Antiquarian Journal*)

The chancel arch of the Priory church of ST. SAVIOUR at GLENDALOUGH, Wicklow (Pl. IVa), has two orders of colonetted jambs and a third order borne by a half-column. The bases are of slight projection and very varied decoration (49). While several are like scalloped capitals inverted, others, also not unlike capitals, have step-pattern and various stylized foliage enrichments. Some of their rounded upper members are also enriched. At the top of these plain shafts are capitals (only those on the south side are original) of cushion or scalloped form, the former with a key-pattern decoration, the latter plain. It is the capital of the inner order (Pl. IVb) a half-column, which is of greatest interest. It has human heads at both angles, with hair strands entwined with an animal on the west and a triskele on the east side and with the gunwale of a

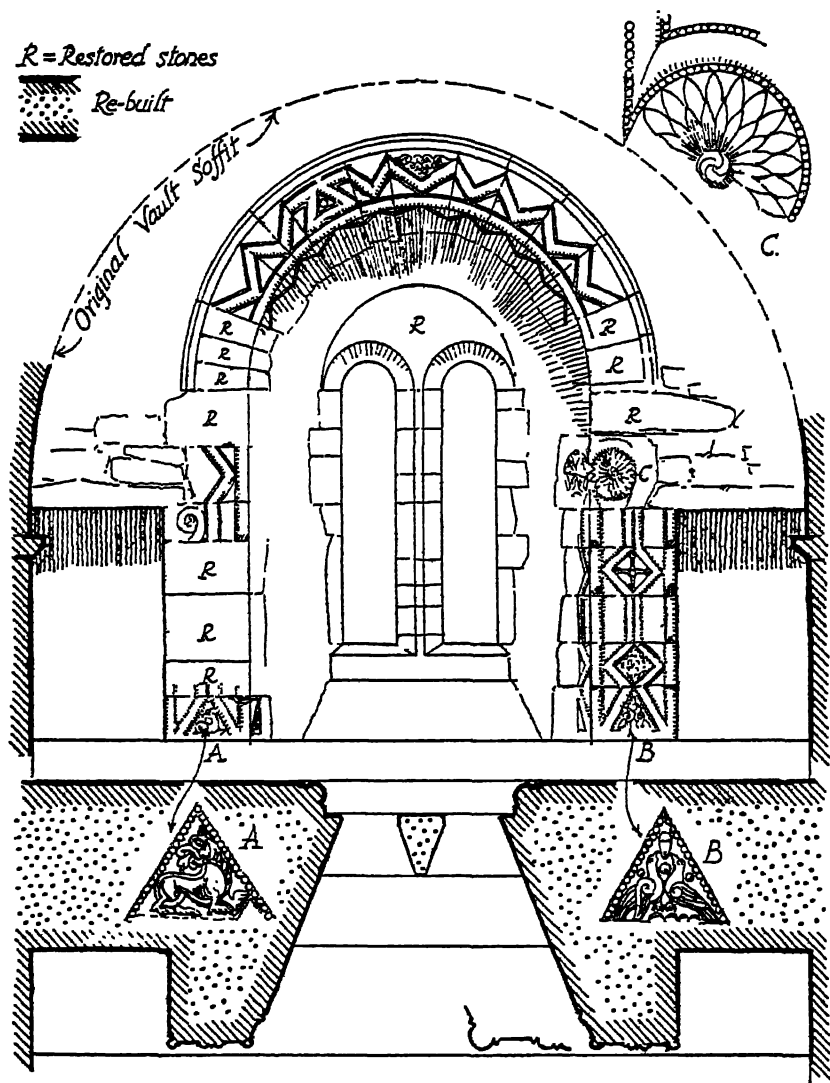
boat or galley, complete with sail and indications of the crew, in the centre of the north and broadest face. The jambs support three orders of arches (re-erected about 1875) of which the outermost is square in section, slightly chamfered at the arris, the second is of chevrons in the familiar point-out position—the ribbon—and the third, which continues eastwards in the form of a tunnel, with chevrons on face and soffit meeting at the arris and enclosing in the



50. Glendalough, Wicklow: St. Saviour's Priory
Spandrel ornaments in Chancel Arch

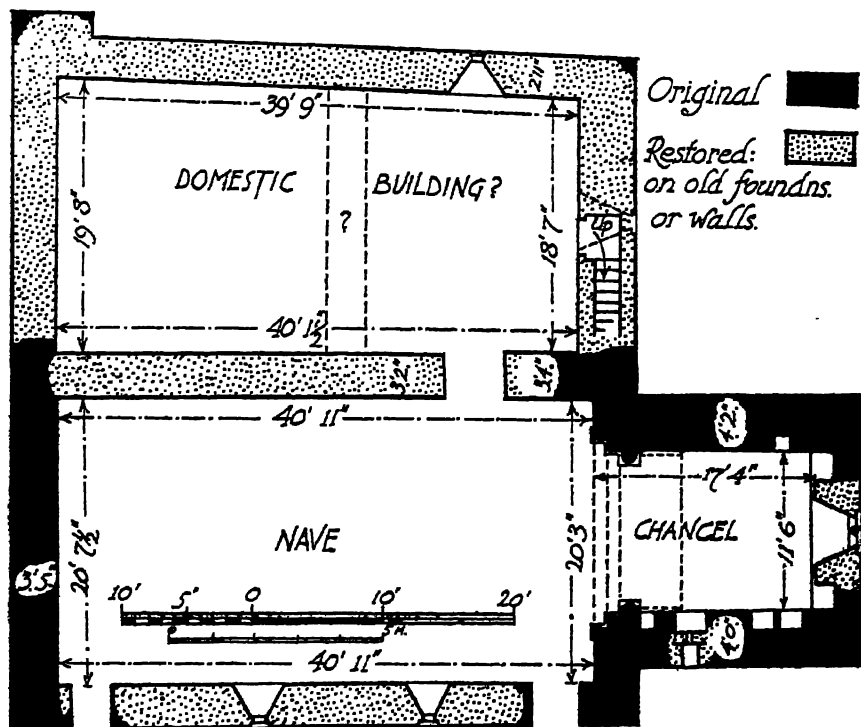
spandrels a variety of ornaments: interlaced knots, stylized anthe-mia and small human heads (50). The east window (51) of the once vaulted chancel is not a perfectly correct restoration, with the original stones. It is of interest because—unique among the Irish churches of the period—it has twin lights within the one embrasure. For this reason it may not be of the same period as the archway but somewhat later in date. The jambs and arch are decorated with roll mouldings at the angles and others paired on the broader faces

with double chevrons or lozenge-shaped panels connected by straight sections. The panels contain interesting designs and two have symbols: a lion (of the Resurrection ?) biting its tail, and two birds beak to beak with a human head between (of uncertain



51. Glendalough, Wicklow, St. Saviour's Priory
Inside Elevation of East Window

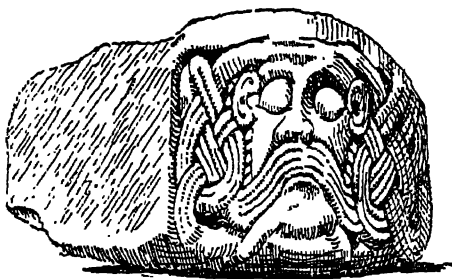
symbolism but a very widely spread and well-known design). Bordering the containing rolls are lines of very fine pellets or beads, of pyramidal section, very suggestive of the rows of fine dots to be found in Irish illuminated MSS., but not unknown in Norman work. Externally this window is set in a shallow recess, a casement, spanned by a round arch, chevron-ornamented, borne on the delicately scalloped capitals of slender three-quarter pillars. Animal heads terminate a hood mould decorated on the splay with small, carved disks. The plan of the priory (52) shows, in the position of a north aisle, a building which must have been domestic in purpose—at least in part.



52. Glendalough, Wicklow, St. Saviour's Priory Plan

The four windows of the nave and domestic buildings—two are shown (58)—are restorations with the original stones. All are

round-headed, measure from 7 to 12 inches in width and of about $3\frac{1}{2}$ feet in height. They all splay widely towards the interior and have external recesses, "casements." Two of these are square-edged, one has five-sided columns on the arris, and the fourth has a chamfered angle. This last type is found in many other Irish churches of the twelfth century (cf. Donaghmore [78]). The square rebate of the casement may have held a wooden frame—for glazing—as certainly was the case in some churches of the following century.



53. Duleek, Meath Capital

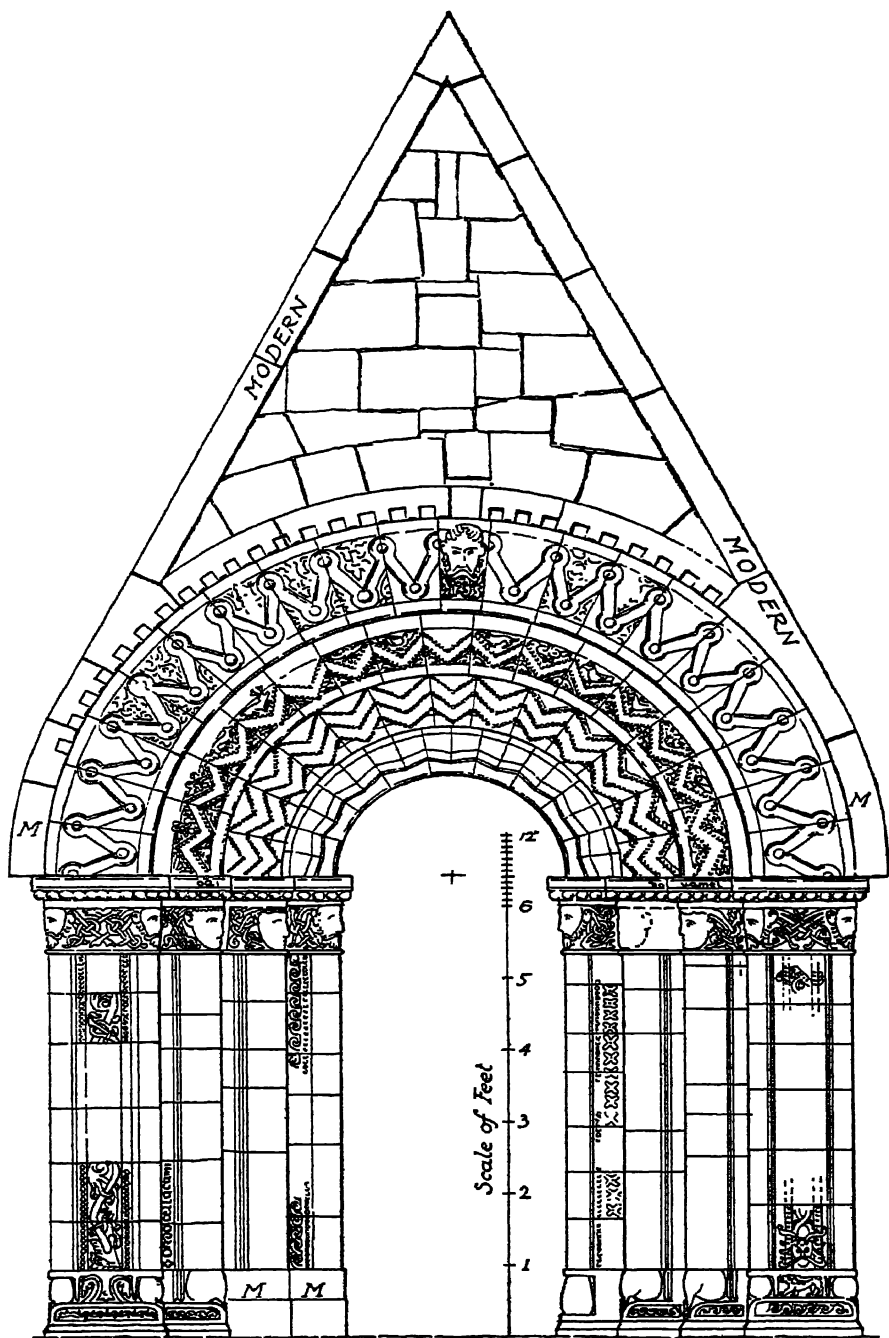
Far away to the west, at ANNAGHDOWN, Galway, preserved in the walls of the "Abbey" there, are pilasters treated in a manner very similar to the inner face of the Glendalough window (Pl. V) with angle-rolls between which are others bordering decorated lozenge-shaped panels, not contiguous but joined by short straight sections made up of a double roll. At the same place and doubtless belonging originally to the pilasters, are capitals with masks at the angles. As will be seen later, this type of capital is very common in Irish work. There are examples also, single fragments, at Duleek, Meath (53) and Innisfallen, Kerry (54).



INNISFALLEN CAP.

54

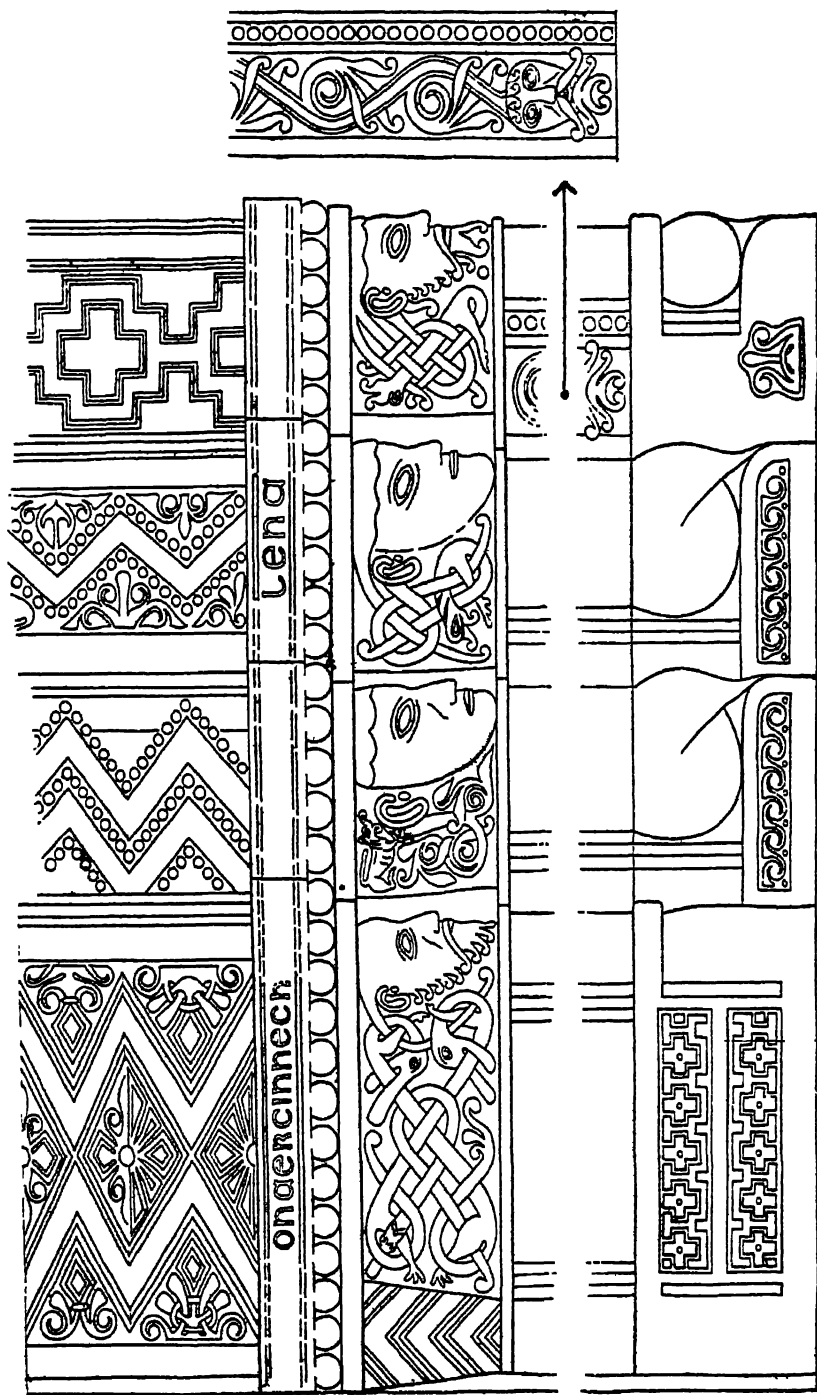
At the "Abbey" church of INCHBOFIN, Westmeath, there is preserved in the south wall, a small, widely splayed window (Pl. IIIb) which has chevron ornament all round the inner edge of its embrasure, on both face and splay. This ornament is very finely cut, hardly more than etched, and consists of a band (just over 5 inches wide) of three continuous chevrons separated by narrow



55. Killeshin Church, Leix Western Doorway
(Leish; North Munster Antiquarian Journal)

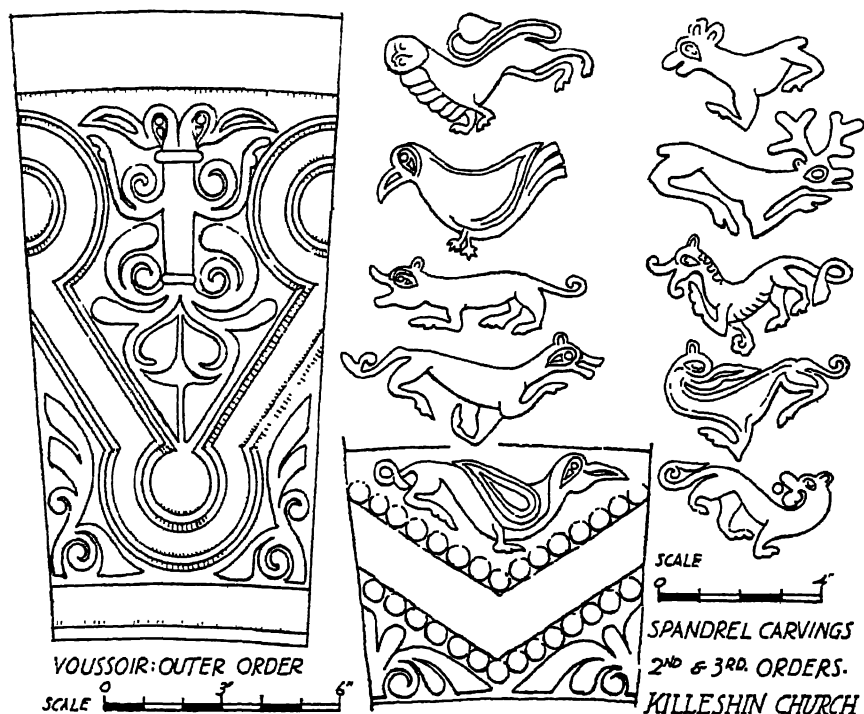
fillets and bounded by a line of fine pellets or pearls. The points of the chevrons overlap the arris a little and in the triangular spandrels are key patterns and stiff anthemion leaves.

No doorway of the period and phase is more attractive in design or epitomises so well the native features of the style than that of the ruined church of KILLESHIN, Leix, about four miles to the west of Carlow town, (55 to 58). The shallowly moulded colonettes are there, rising from bulbous bases; the outer of the four orders of piers is a pilaster broader than the others and has a vertical panel of decoration (a stylized foliage scroll) between the fillets, and rows of small bosses in grooves defining the colonettes; much use is made of narrow running scroll patterns on the lower bases and the flat faces of the inner order. But it is the frieze-like capitals (56 and Pl. VIa), each with angle-masks—faces both bearded and shaven—and elaborate interlacements, some of the Scandinavian “Urnes” style (Pl. VIa), which most distinguish this work of art. Above the capitals is a bold abacus with a decoration of bosses, and from this spring the four orders of arches, all very delicately carved with ornament in rich variety. The chevron, imaginatively treated, is the master motive: the broad face of the first order has a large chevron pattern, each apex, made circular and each spandrel filled with a floral or zoomorphic design (57), but the soffit is covered with a pattern of sunk Greek crosses. The edge or arris moulding of this arch and those which succeed it is a roll, very much flattened, with a small square-edged fillet forming the extreme arris. The second arch has, on both face and soffit, a running single chevron of flattened roll section, outlined—like all the others—by rows of fine pellets. In the spandrels are stylized leaf-patterns (anthemion derived), birds and animals—some mythical, like the manticora (51). The third arch has on both faces a double chevron band also outlined and separated by fine pellets and over-lapping the arris moulding a little where the pellets are carved in false relief. On the face of the fourth arch is the chevron in “ribbon” form but of low projection, and an angle-roll. It is the least highly decorated of the arches. It is otherwise with the soffit of this order. This is



56. Killeshin, Leix Bases, Capitals and Arch Soffits of Church Doorway
(*Crawford: J.R.S.A.I.*)

carved superficially all over with a design of opposed chevrons which form triangular spandrels and lozenges all filled with stylized leafage, anthemion-palmette derived. Rising over the whole is a steep-sided triangular gable or pediment, springing tangentially from the extrados of a dentil-decorated hood-moulding. This type of "tight-fitting" pediment is found elsewhere in the country—at Donaghmore and Roscrea, Tipperary; Clonfert, Galway; and



57. Killeshin, Leix Voussoir and spandrel carvings

the doorway of Kildare Round Tower, but is rare in Britain. (One almost Irish example there is situated in the west: at Lullington in Somerset.) The Killeshin door jambs do not incline in the Irish fashion but there is some small evidence of a re-building. The portal is one of the very few which bears, or bore, an inscription (cf. also Freshford and Monaincha) and it is very regrettable that



V ANNAGHDOWN, GALWAY

Pillars preserved in Abbey

(see p 157)

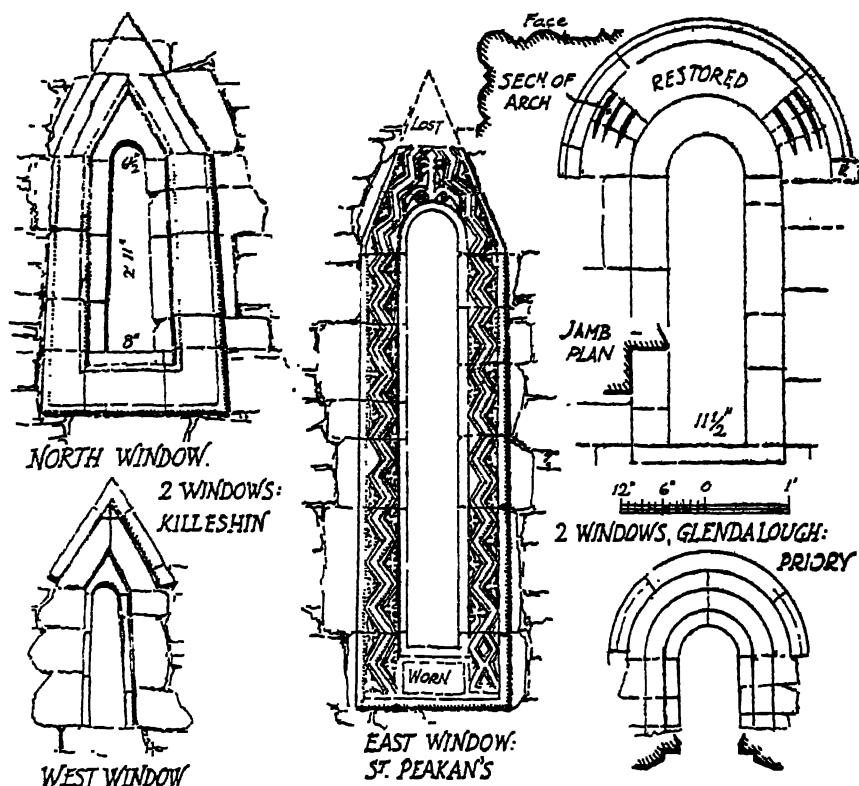


VIa KILLESBIN, LEIN
Capital in West Doorway
(see p. 101)



VIb. ROSCREA, TIPPERARY
St. Cronan's Church, West Front
(see p. 125)

the weather and an iconoclast have defaced large parts of the wording. If this inscription were completely legible it is almost certain that it would provide a clue to the date of the doorway. This has long been recognized and much study has been given to the broken wording. Several versions of the legible and partly legible parts have been published. The most reliable is the latest; that of the late Professor Macalister¹⁴ which, accepting the clear letters, amends some parts of former readings of the more defaced words and suggests how the lacunae may have been filled. The main inscription—for there are two—runs along the fascia (the flat upper face) of the abacus beginning on the side of the outer, northern, jamb and continuing along the succeeding faces to the inside face of the door opening. It starts again on the opposite, the south, inner fascia and continues outwards to finish on the front face of the second order. It follows the usual formula: “OR DO” “OROIT DO”—or in this case apparently DA); i.e., a prayer for “. . . . D.AR I LAGEN,” which Macalister thinks may be “DIARMAIT RI LAGEN”; i.e., Diarmait King of Leinster. The “AR” has usually been taken to be “ART” but the third letter is by no means clear and the fact that there was no king of Leinster called Art reigning “within any conceivable limits of date for the doorway,” as Macalister says, rules this name out. There was a King Diarmait who died in 1117. It is tempting to think that the doorway was erected by him and it is just conceivable that this was the case, but there can be no certainty in the matter. The other names which survive in part cannot be connected with any known historical personages. The only complete name remaining is in the secondary inscription, which runs up the face of the second jamb order on the north side. It calls for a prayer for one Cellachan who may have been the mason-artist of this small masterpiece of Irish art. Little remains of the walls of the church except the west gable and a part of the north wall. In this, rather high up, is a notable window (58). It is round-headed, just 3 feet in height, and tapers in width from 8 inches at the sill to an inch and a half less at the springing. A projecting architrave, which is carried up into steep



58. Twelfth-century Windows Killeshin, St. Peakan's and Glendalough

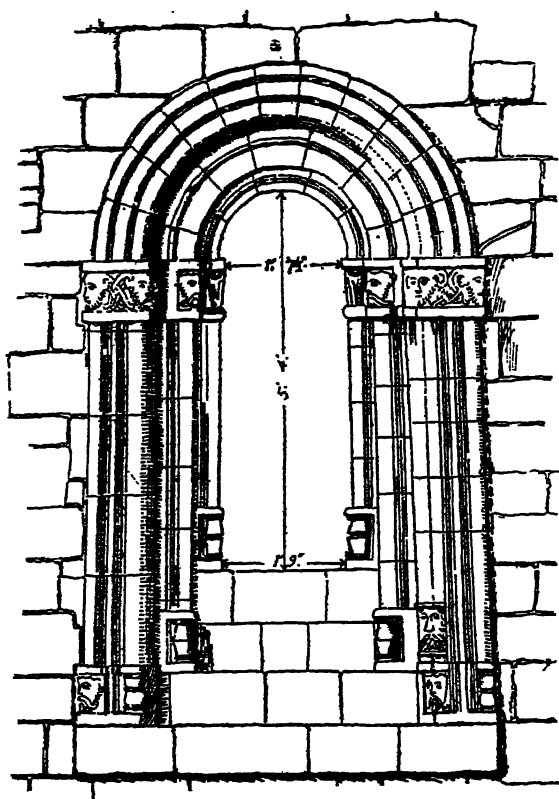
gable form, borders the opening externally and has a bead mould on each arris. Internally the embrasure splays to 3 feet 3 inches. Its jambs also incline and have a small arris roll moulded upon them and carried round the arch. Neat scroll-form bases terminate it. High up in the gable above the west door is a very similar but simpler window also gabled externally (58).

During works of repair to the small church of ST. PEAKAN, TOUREEN, Tipperary, other architraved and gabled windows were found. One in the south wall, where there seem to have been two originally, is quite small but the stones of a larger window (58) were found in the debris of the fallen east wall, and have been re-erected with it. These windows differ from the Killeshin example only in size, in the lack of a casement, and in having overall decoration of

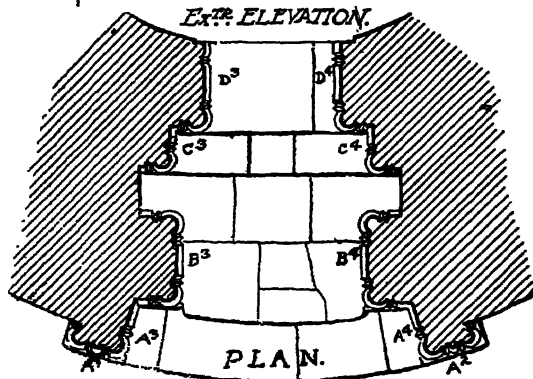
low-relief chevrons and conventional, anthemion-derived designs in the spandrels.

In the Round Tower at TIMAHOE, Leix, is one of the few decorated doorways to be found in those structures. It cannot be omitted in a discussion of Irish church architecture of the period. In form and detail the doorway bears a strong likeness to the Killeshin portal but is obviously the work of a less accomplished artist; it is altogether cruder in execution but is, none the less, of great interest (59, 60).

The wall in which this remarkable doorway stands is over 3 feet 9 inches in thickness. Consequently the portal is a deep one and is made up of two groups of arches; one forming the outer part and in two orders, the other, also in two orders, within. Each order stands upon a plain step. The pilasters, sill and arch which make up the first order project about three inches from the tower wall and in effect form a complete border, almost an architrave. All the piers converge in typical Irish fashion and are square in plan, modelled into the typical shallow angle colonettes, bordered by angular fillets. The capitals are of the frieze form and all but the innermost have corner-masks of bearded men. These are very like the Killeshin examples but the interlace patterns which unite them are entirely made up of locks of hair—the “ Urnes ” zoomorphs of the Leix doorway are absent. On the innermost capital scallop forms are crudely modelled. Perhaps the most curious departure from the Killeshin scheme is to be seen in the pier-bases where bearded masks again appear at three of the angles, while another similar mask forms the lower termination of one of the outer order colonettes. At the other angles of the bases are moulded members of hour-glass or barrel shape, suggestive of turnery, one of them not unlike two bulbous bases superimposed. The round arches call for less remark. The first has an angle-roll and fillets and a row of discs on the soffit; the second which is a soffit rib, is chevroned on the soffit to form lozenge compartments, and has an outer roll. Of the two inner arches the first has chevrons pointing out and the second bears bold angle-rolls and a lozenge pattern on the soffit. Higher in



Ex^{te}. ELEVATION.



PLAN.

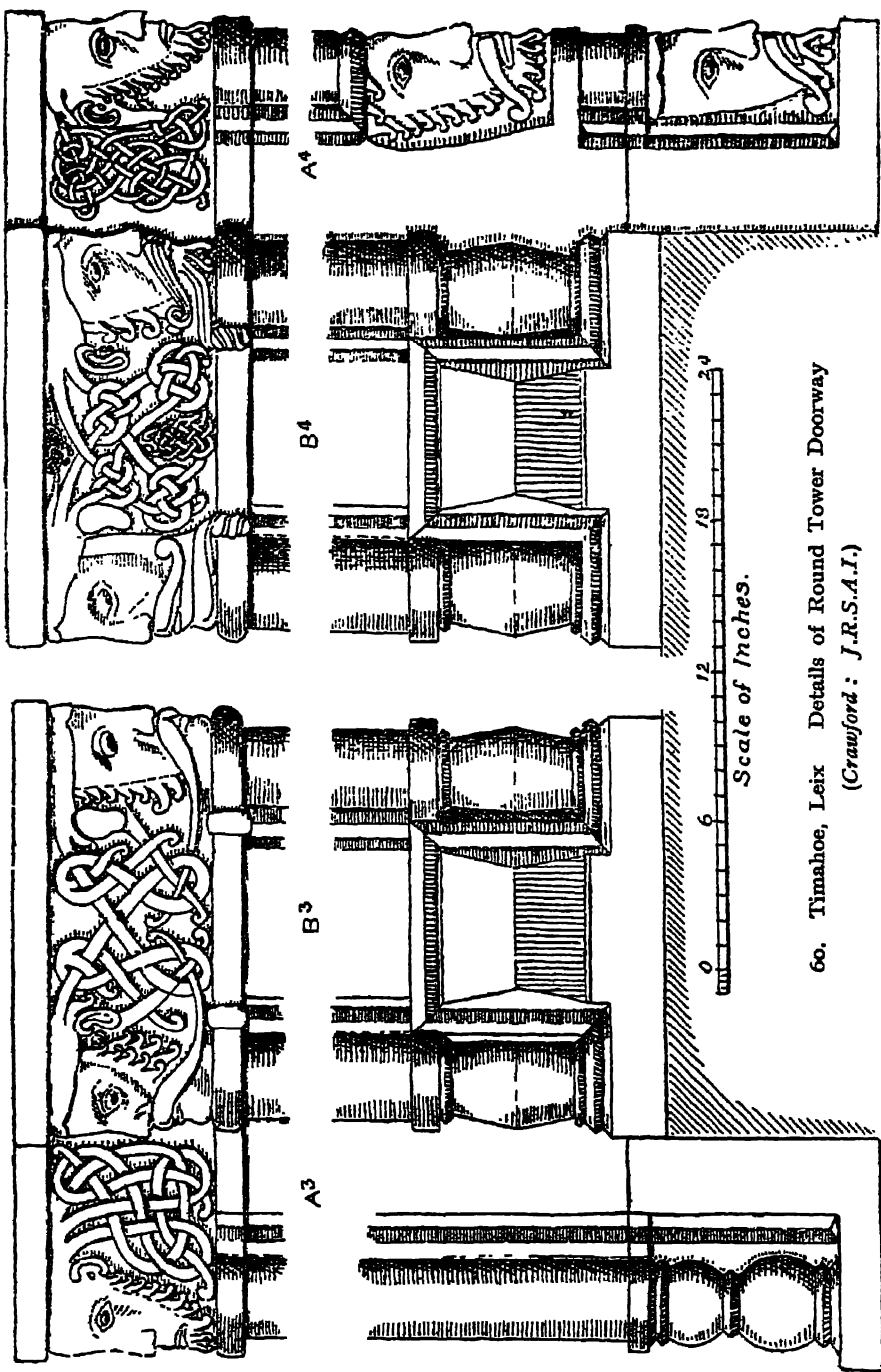
59. Timahoe, Leix Doorway of Round Tower
(Crawford and Leash: J.R.S.A.I.)



VII. INCHAGOILI., GALWAY

West Doorway of Church

(see p 110)



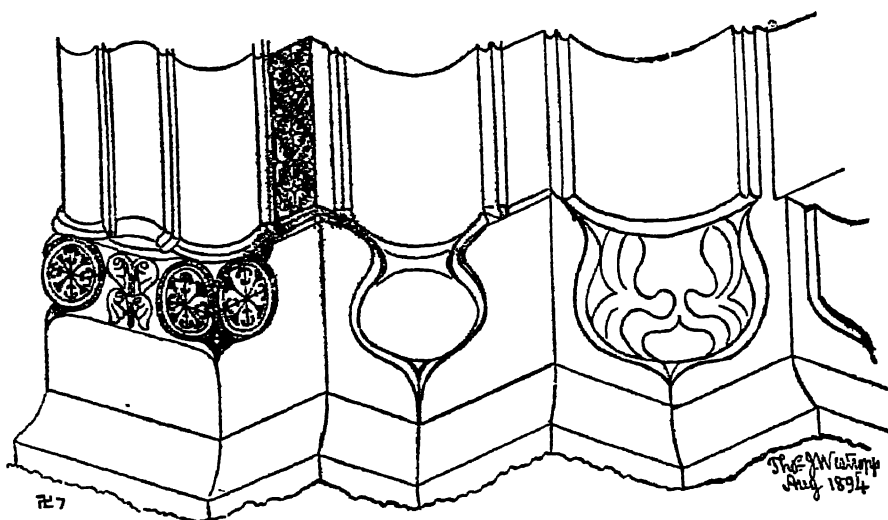
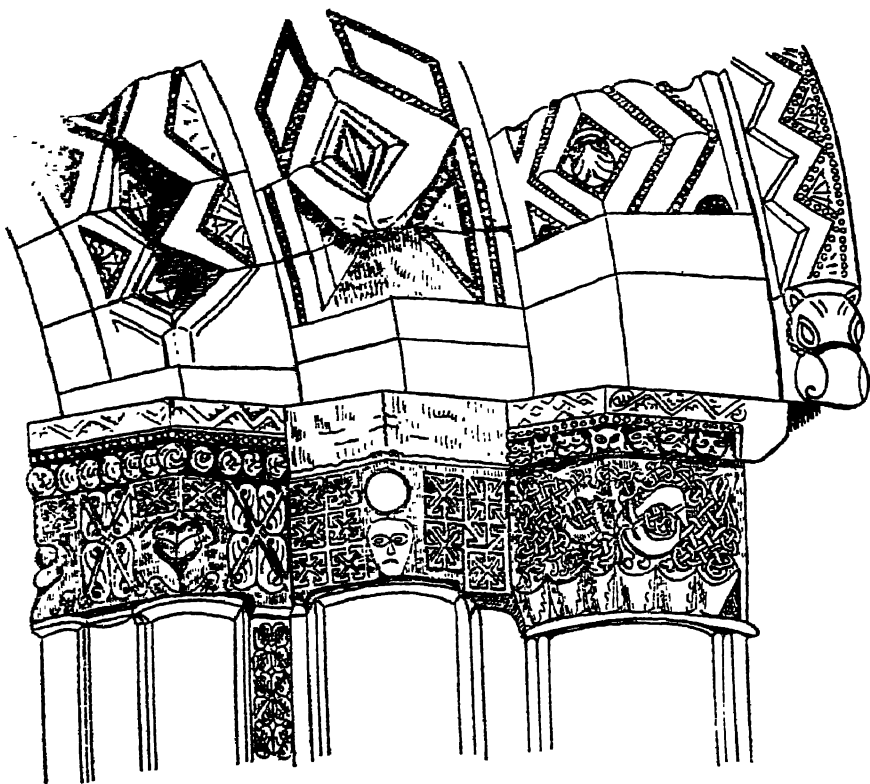
the tower is a small round-headed window which has a projecting sill and shallow pilasters with mask capitals on a small scale. Above these rises a very steep, close-fitting pediment or gable with its sides tangential to the curve of the round opening below.

In the Round Tower at KILDARE is another elaborated doorway of the period which also seems to have had a tight-fitting pediment. The door, being built of a soft red sandstone, is much decayed in its outer parts and only a vestige of the apex of the gable remains. The first of the three orders is plain and featureless—possibly as a result of decay and crude repair. The second arch, rising from square jambs, is made up of outward pointing chevrons but the soffit, only, of the inner order, has a pattern of lozenges, each decorated with conventional leaf designs. The colonette-moulded piers which support this arch have frieze capitals not unlike those of the inner order at Timahoe and bases which also recall the same work.

Reconstructed at some uncertain but probably early date is the doorway (Pl. VII) of the small church at INCHAGOILL (L. Corrib), Galway. It is now of three orders of pier and arch but there are indications that it was once of different and bolder design: the stones of the second order of piers once supported a soffit arch but have been turned through 90 degrees to face outwards, and the ribbon chevroned arch they now support was not designed for them. The outer arch springs from skewback stones which do not look original and its component voussoirs, each boldly carved with a human head, seem to belong to a different—perhaps larger—arch. The door is built of a local sandstone full of small shells which have weathered away on the surface, leaving it pitted all over; a disfigurement which masks the design of the frieze-form capitals with their angle-masks which, while bearing a striking likeness to those of the Timahoe tower doorway, are more Scandinavian in character. The piers and outer pilasters, which project as at Killeslin and Timahoe, are shallowly wrought with colonettes and fillets and rest on low bases of small relief, much worn, some of which have a zoomorphic interlace decoration. There can be no doubt that the

original doorway was bolder and deeper and had, as its second order, a soffit arch supported by the present pillars of the second order. This sort of design we have seen at Timahoe and occurs or occurred in deep porches at Cashel and at Donaghmore (*infra*).

The oldest parts of the NUNS' CHURCH at CLONMAC-NOISE, Offaly (6r and Pl. XV), a nave and chancel building which lies isolated eastward of the monastic city, are the jambs of the fine chancel arch. The church, according to the Annals, was completed in 1166. That this "completion" should rather be termed "restoration" is indicated by the very elaborate—even over-elaborate—details of the three orders of arches and of the west doorway, both characteristic of a late phase of the style and reasonably assignable to the date, 1166. It is otherwise with regard to the jambs which support these highly carved arches and belong to an earlier phase. These piers (6r) are in three orders, plus an advanced pilaster on the western face of the walls and a similar pilaster to the east, are square in plan and shallowly modelled in the familiar first phase manner, i.e., with engaged columns but rather wider than those styled colonettes in preceding pages. There are bulbous bases to two orders and square bases, superficially decorated, to the main pier, which is the innermost. On it the engaged columns have between them a broad hollow bounded by double fillets. The abaci are almost identical with those at Rahan except that some of the bosses are small animal heads instead of the bud-like forms found in the former church. The capitals are heavy, square blocks, emphatically frieze-like, and covered with small scale, superficial decoration: interlace, key-patterns and stylized foliage, much of it not suited to stone carving. It is difficult to think that the designer was a mason. More probable is it that he was a scribe thinking in terms of illumination. But the mason, it seems, was not to be denied entirely; he carved his angle-masks, one above the other, on the second capital and hacked the angle of the main capital into crude suggestions of eyebrow, nose and chin. Small scallops appear in one cap. On the whole this frieze of capitals is the least satisfactory, artistically, of any in the Irish series. The other features



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St. J. W. Westropp
Aug. 1894

61. Clonmacnoise, Offaly, The Nuns' Church Details of Chancel Archway
(Westropp : J.R.S.A.I.)

of this interesting church have their place in a later phase to be treated of in the place proper to it.

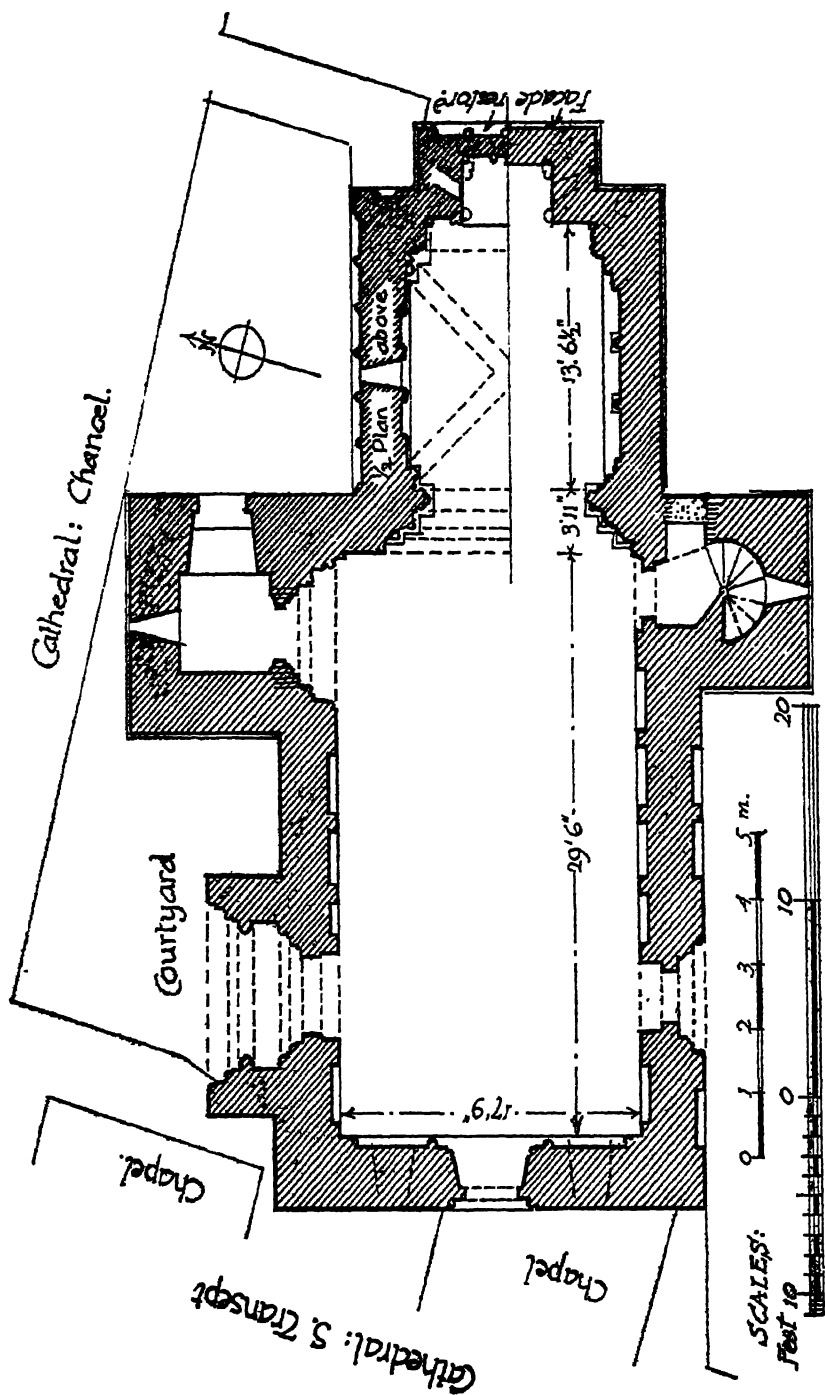
That the buildings so far dealt with fit into the framework hypothecated and belong together to one phase of the style, and that they are datable to the first half of the century is the view of the writer. Some probably belong to its first three decades; Killeslin, where the decoration has extended to the pier surfaces in some degree, is perhaps the latest of them. Within a few years of 1130 a new architectural phenomenon made its appearance: Cormac's Chapel at Cashel. In a chronological treatment of our subject it must, therefore, take its place here though, stylistically, as will be seen, it really should be considered apart from the normal native work.

5. CORMAC'S CHAPEL, CASHEL, *and its Derivatives*

The most remarkable Irish building of the twelfth century—it would be remarkable in any century or place—is Teampuill Chormaic at Cashel, founded by the king-bishop Cormaic Mac Carthach during his short reign (1122-1138) and familiarly known as CORMAC'S CHAPEL. It was consecrated in 1134 in the presence of a great assembly of clergy and the important laymen of Munster met together at the capital of that kingdom. This impressive rock site, a royal seat from at least the fourth century, seems to have been in joint lay and clerical occupation, as fortress-palace and monastery, for a considerable time before it was granted in its entirety to the church by King Murtagh O'Brien (Muirceartach Ua Briain) in 1101. The fine Round Tower Belfry, probably of the tenth century, but perhaps later, is witness to the existence on the Rock—on the analogy of other Irish sites—of churches and, doubtless, dwellings of the religious. This double use dated in all probability to at least the times of the earlier king-bishop Cormac MacCuileannáin, who reigned at Cashel from 896 to 908.

Remarkable as is the Chapel in its plan, structure and architectural features, it is not a quite representative example of the

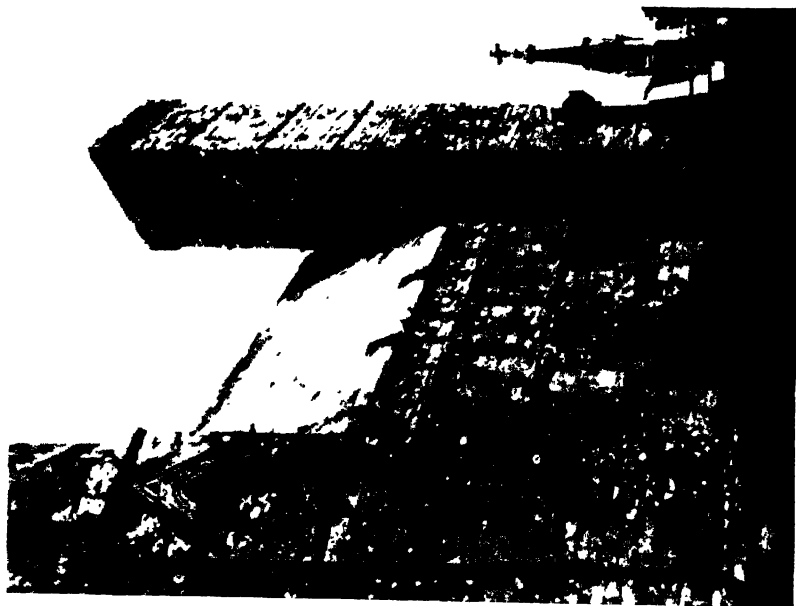
Irish Romanesque. None the less, it must receive close consideration here. It seems to have exerted much less influence than might be expected on the native style. In several respects it is an exotic, exhibiting features of a Teutonic cast. This is not surprising when the many links which bound the homeland at that time with the Irish monasteries of the Rhineland and central Germany are taken into account. There were Irish and Irish-manned foundations in these regions: at Cologne, Metz, Erfurt, Ratisbon and other places in Germanic lands, set up there from the tenth century onwards. Though intercourse with Ireland is not extensively documented, it appears at times to have been close. Certainly this was so when the great Irish house at Ratisbon projected the building of a new monastery there, dedicated to St. James, in the early years of the twelfth century. Abbot Dionysius or Domnus (1098-1221) sent two Irishmen of good family to seek in Ireland, from the kings and princes, contributions towards the new work. With them he sent two other Irishmen of lesser degree (lay brethren?), Conrad, the carpenter, and William. This visit took place about 1111—at latest by 1121, the date of Abbot Domnus's death and is significant in that it shows how easily fresh art motives or building details could be carried from Germany to Ireland. It is also significant that another abbot of Ratisbon, Christian (succ. 1133), himself a MacCarthy, came to Ireland twice, definitely on collecting tours. His first visit took place soon after his accession and possibly he was present at the consecration of Teampuill Chormaic. He certainly came to Cashel at a later date, for he died and was buried there. The features which seem to have been imported through this recorded intercourse, or perhaps at an earlier date, are as follows: twin towers in a transeptal position; storeys of blank wall-arcading; the character of much of the carved work and the high gable over the north doorway, so obviously a stone version of a timber-framed and plaster-filled prototype. The quite distinctively Irish feature of the building (excluding minor matters of detail) is the high-pitched roof of stone discussed in the chapter on the Irish stone roof.



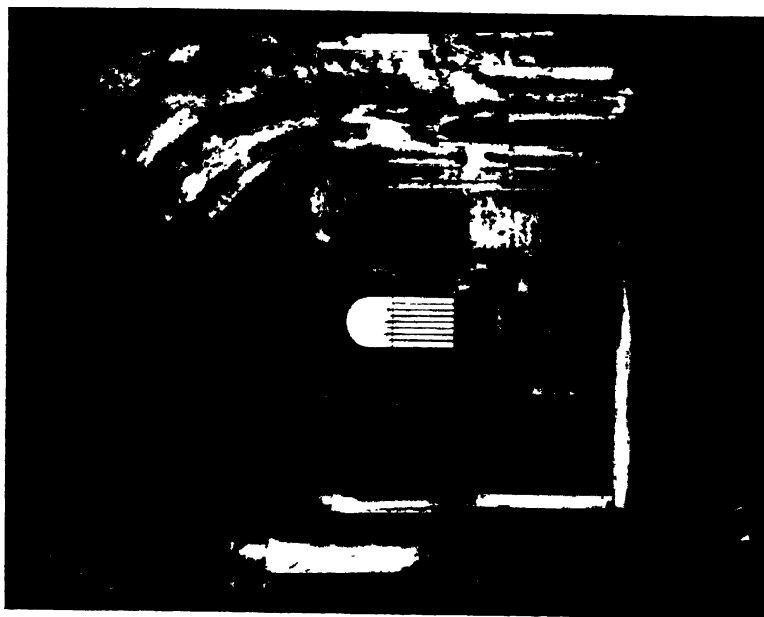
62. Cashel, Tipperary, Cormac's Chapel Plan
(After Hill)

The chapel (Plan, 62) has nave and chancel, the former of a length-breadth proportion of $2\frac{3}{4}$ to 1 (29 feet 6 inches to 17 feet 9 inches) and the latter a little longer than it is wide (13 feet $6\frac{1}{2}$ inches by 10 feet $10\frac{1}{2}$ inches); the former somewhat longer than the short oblong typical of many earlier Irish churches. A bold archway in a wall 3 feet 8 inches in thickness joins nave and chancel, giving a total internal length of about 46 feet 9 inches. The towers already mentioned flank the nave at its east end; a grouping not uncommon in German work. The south and smaller tower, about 10 feet square overall, housed at least one bell as well as the stairs to the croft. The northern tower, somewhat larger, is five (or six ?) storeys in height, internally, beneath a stone, pyramidal roof. It was not a belfry since its three top storeys have no openings at all, but there was a doorway at the ground level, facing east, while another, large and elaborately treated, leads into the nave. Doubtless these openings were for clergy use and it is possible that the upper rooms served as treasuries.

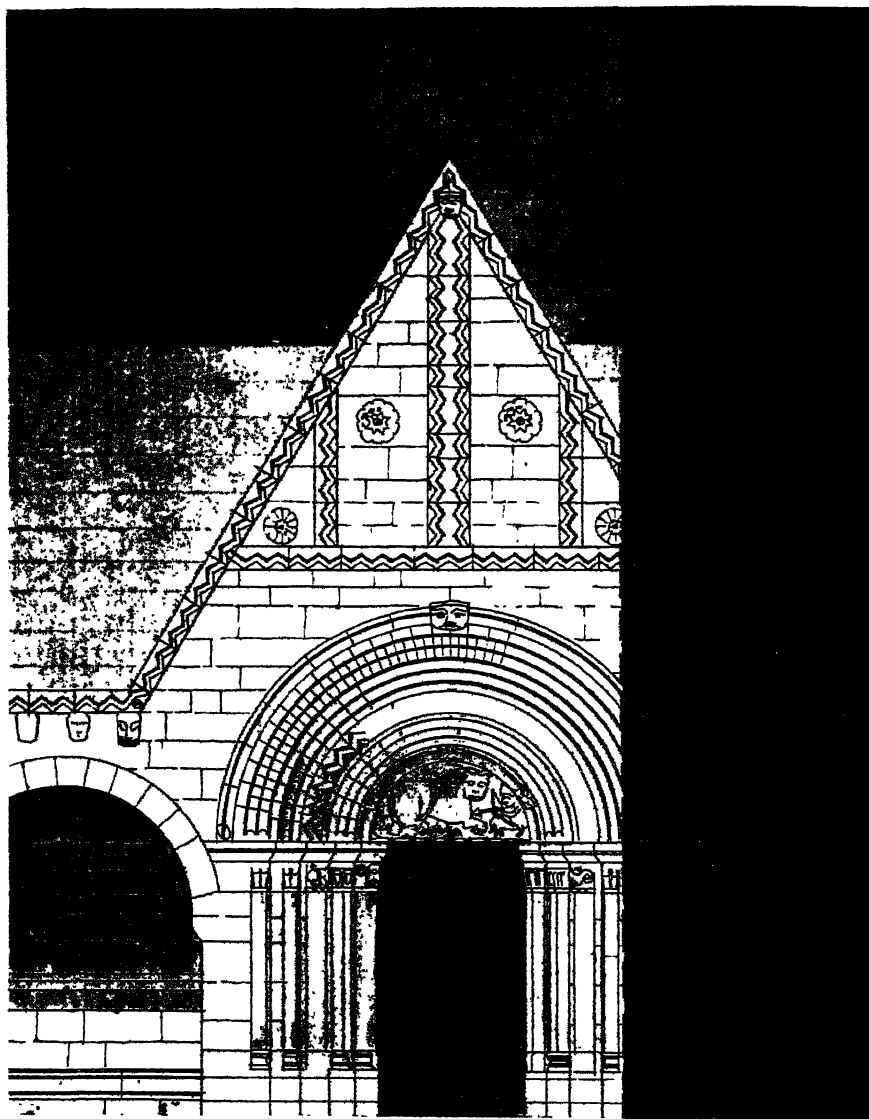
Curiously, the small chancel is not on the same axis as the nave but to the south of that line. This eccentricity suggests a change in plan after the start of the building operations: a decision to have a wider nave than was at first intended. The chancel archway is higher, in proportion to its width, than any other example in the Irish Romanesque; another indication, perhaps, of foreign influence. It is of four orders. The first pier has shallow double colonettes and supports an arch ring of similar section; the second is bevelled and its splay is decorated with four human heads or masks below a capital neither quite human nor quite animal. Its arch ring has a quarter-circle hollow from which peer numerous human heads. The third pier has an engaged column of twist form and the inner pier has shallow engaged columns on each angle. Of the arch rings over these two piers the first is moulded with a roll and bold hollow bordered by angular fillets, and the innermost—which is, in effect, a soffit arch or rib—has a running chevron on the face, a roll moulding within and a very bold roll in the centre. This roll retains some remnants of painted decoration at its summit. Over the



VIII b CORMAC'S CHAPEL, CASHEL.
South side
(see p. 30)



VIII a CORMAC'S CHAPEL, CASHEL.
Interior, looking west
(see p. 30)



IX. CORMAC'S CHAPEL, CASHEL

North Porch

(see p. 40)

chancel is a vault with heavy groin ribs of half-round section, springing from engaged pillars. Both side-walls are arcaded in two storeys and there are shallow niches at each side of the small, eastern altar recess which also has a triple arcade in its end wall. Heads form a part of the decoration in this and below the vault. Traces of painting are still to be seen in the severies of the vault and in some of the arcades at the sides. The lighting of the altar recess is curiously indirect: small loops to right and left admit a little light and the plan of their jambs suggests that the first intention of the builders was to construct an apsidal recess, in the continental fashion or one three-sided externally, but that this, apparently, was soon abandoned, after the building work had been begun, for the square termination normal in Britain and further west. (The exterior stone facing is a restoration.) The apse never became really popular west of the North Sea.

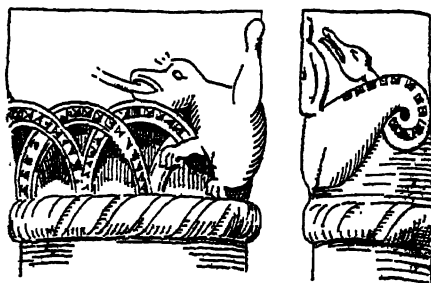
The side-walls of the nave, nowhere less than three feet in thickness, bear the massive round vault which spans the space and is strengthened and diversified by bold, unmoulded arch ribs. These spring from short half-columns standing upon a broad shelf above the arcaded lower wall. The interior (Pl. VIIIa) is dark, ill-lit by two windows of doubtful but probably medieval date pierced in the south wall above the wall arcade, and destroying parts of the arcade in the wall-face without. But the nave was not always dark. In the west wall there were originally three windows admitting a flood of light. These were obscured—two of them entirely built up—when the transept of the thirteenth century cathedral was erected. The larger building embraces the chapel in such fashion that the north doorway, the most striking feature of the exterior of the chapel, now looks into a narrow, triangular courtyard bounded by the towering walls of the thirteenth century and by the chapel itself. The designer was at great pains to make this entrance imposing, even majestic. Depth for the portal (Pl. IX) was gained by thickening the chapel wall here to three times its thickness elsewhere. The almost tunnel-like archway has two bold outer orders of pillar and arch, followed by a third, which is

essentially a soffit arch, with supporting pillars. Still further in are jambs of three orders supporting two arch rings and the carved tympanum stone. Above the portal rises a wide and steep gable, its verge or barge courses, level string and upright members ornamented with running chevrons. The likeness to a framed timber structure, with barge boards, collar-tie and upright posts is so exact as to make it obvious that the whole is a translation into stone of a large, timber-framed gable of a kind to be found in Germany even in late medieval times. The rosettes which decorate the spaces between the "timbers" reinforce the likeness in their suggestion of plaster decoration. Plaster or stucco decoration, even of mouldings and pillars, was used in eleventh-century Germany¹⁵ and it is not surprising to find an echo at Cashel.

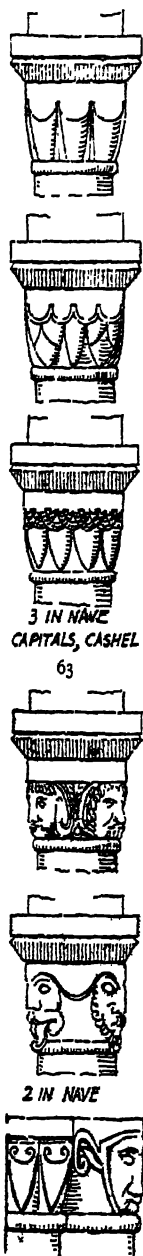
It is the south elevation of the church (Pl. VIII, b.) which is most reminiscent of the Romanesque of Germany and ultimately, of course, of northern Italy, which strongly influenced the Teutonic style. There are three storeys of blind arcading, quite windowless, surmounted by an attic storey of half pillars supporting the main eaves-course. Between these pillars are corbels in the shape of human heads. All the string courses are carried around the south tower and three more divide its upper part into separate storeys. The storey coinciding with the attic has arched recesses, twins to the south and single arches to east and west. The larger tower, to the north, is treated in the same way but, externally, is a storey less in height. Both nave and chancel have stone roofs of very steep pitch. Indeed, the whole building has a height strangely out of proportion to its length. McNeill illustrates an eleventh-century German example: Molverode,¹⁶ in which the same rather ungainly character is evident. The present entrance to the chapel is a round-headed doorway of three orders, with a tympanum. This doorway, though it looks like an after-thought on the part of the builders, cannot be much later than the rest of the work.

The details, mouldings, sculpture, etc., call for consideration in the making of comparisons with other Irish buildings or tracing likenesses with them. Taking them in order this is done concisely

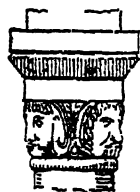
below. Many of the pillars or columns are of the engaged type but expressed more boldly than is usual in most Irish buildings of the period; a few are half-columns and those with spiral fluting occur also. Capitals belong mainly to the following three types: (a) plain cushion capitals, not a favourite Irish form but very common in the earlier Continental Romanesque, are numerous in the blind arcades of the nave's south wall; (b) scalloped capitals which are also much used, for instance, at the west end, in four orders of the north door, in the arcades of the towers and to the attic storey pillars. Others with multiple scalloping (63) occur over the half-columns of the nave, in the chancel arcades and the little reredos-like arcade back of the altar site. Some of this type have also fluting and other decorations. Finally there are (c) human mask and animal form capitals which are fairly numerous, and in some of the capitals of the half-columns in the interior these masks are carved on the angles (64). Both are to be seen in the north doorway where the animal forms—combined in one case with minute intersecting round arches (65)—are quite un-Irish in character. Bases throughout follow Irish fashion, however, in having little projection and being made up of alternating rolls and hollows, sometimes numerous and narrow. Spur ornaments of leaf form occur in the larger bases.



65. Cashel, Tipperary, Cormac's Chapel
Capital in North Doorway
(After Hill)



3 IN NAVE
CAPITALS, CASHEL
63



2 IN NAVE



1 IN N. DOORWAY
CAPITALS, CASHEL
64

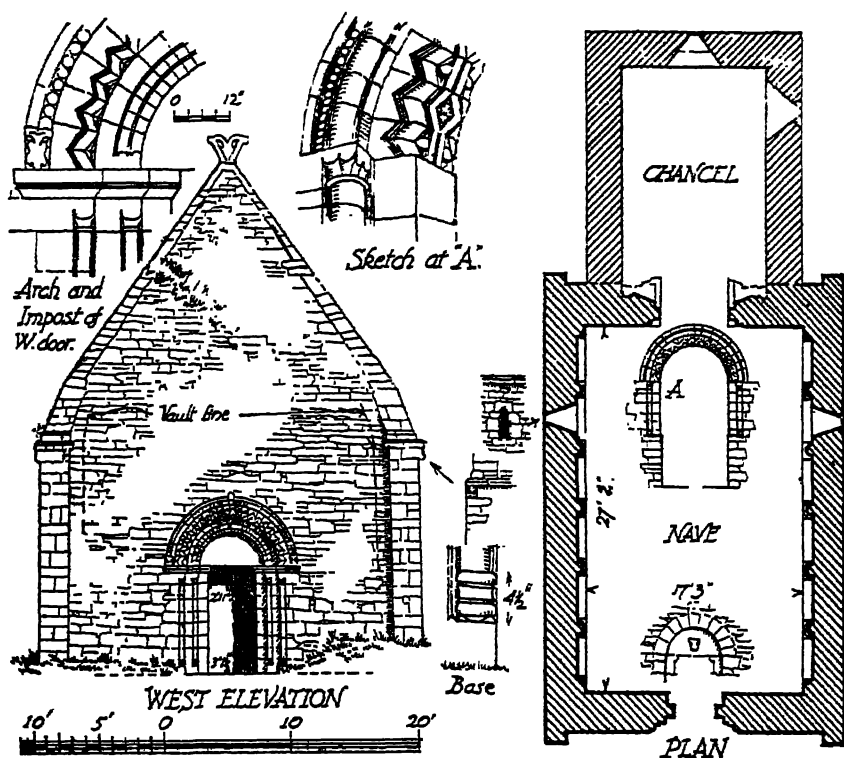
Among mouldings of string-courses and the like is the billet, very uncommon in other Irish buildings, but a commonplace in

"Norman" and continental buildings of the period. It is used in the imposts of the ground storey arcades, within and without, and in the "reredos." The main string-course, below the attic storey, around the towers and across the east end at the eaves level, is decorated with bosses or large beads such as are found in many abaci and impost mouldings of the Irish style.

The chevron, stock ornament of both Irish and Norman work, is present in several forms: as a single running ornament of moderate projection—in the gable of the north porch (Pl. IX) and an order of the chancel arch. In the arches of the inner arcade of the nave it has the very slight relief usual in Irish work and in the form of the ribbon-moulding it appears in the south doorway and that leading from the nave to the north tower, as well as in three orders of the north door. As will be shown later this treatment of the common feature was very popular with the Irish mason. But it occurs at Cashel and in but few other places in Ireland in still another ingenious combination applied to soffit ribs: chevrons on both faces of the arch alternating with lozenges (in effect double chevrons) on the soffit (cf. Kilmalkedar, 67). Decorative diapers of lozenges and the like cover the square pilasters of the wall arcades of the nave.

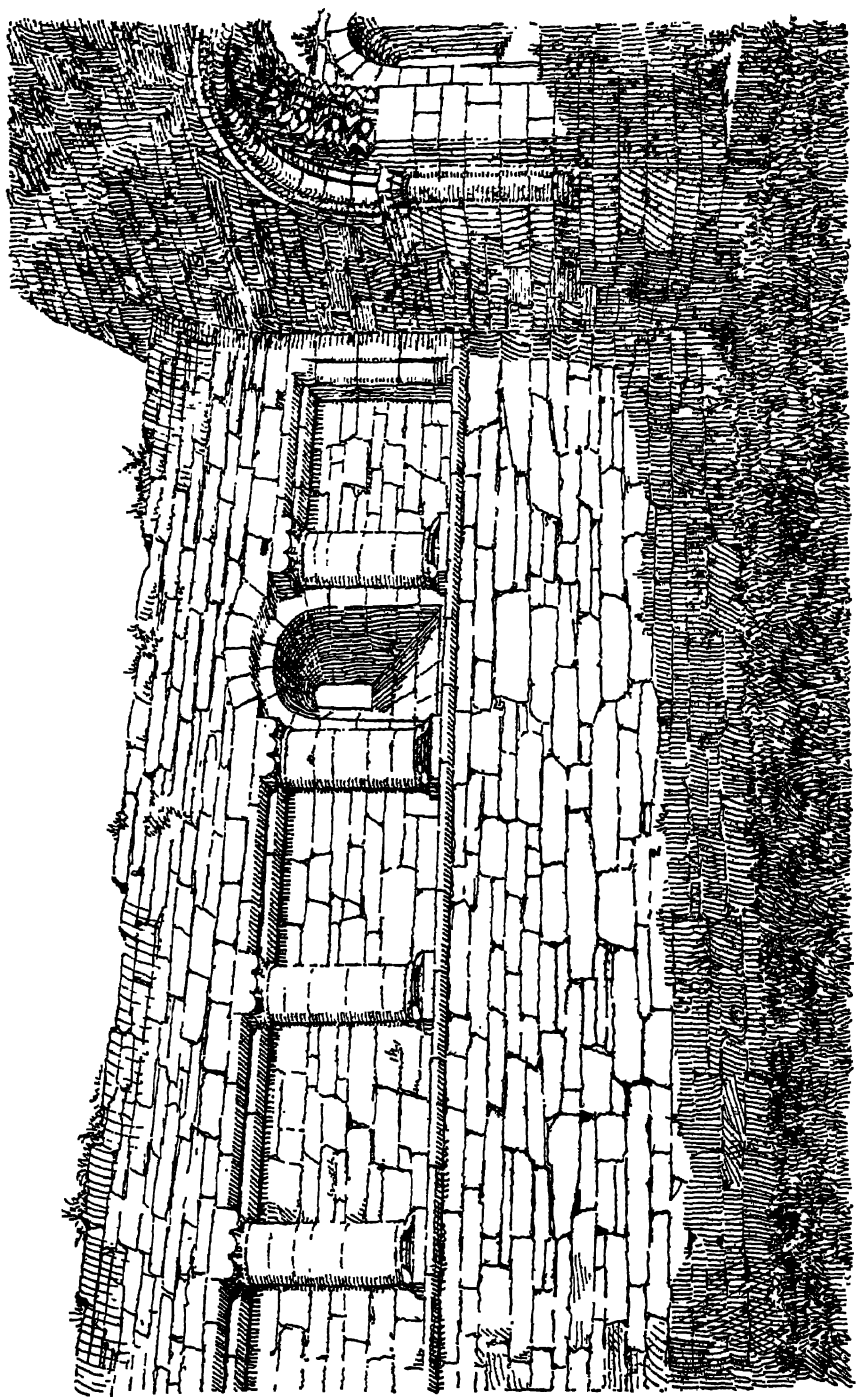
The ashlar masonry of the building, of a buff or brownish sandstone, shows an axed finish where it is not weathered. Another feature common, indeed usual, elsewhere but seldom found in Irish buildings, is the tympanum: the half-circle block of stone filling the innermost part of a door arch. There are two in the chapel (possibly there was one also in the now defaced and built-up eastern door of the north tower); in the south doorway and the north door. The first has a carving of a large animal and the latter is carved with a curious lion-like beast advancing upon an archer-centaur who directs an arrow from his bow towards the animal (Pl. IX). The archer wears a conical helmet of eleventh-twelfth century type with a long, straight nosepiece or "nasal." The symbolism of this carving, unique in Ireland, is not certain.

At KILMALKEDAR (66, 67) over a hundred miles from Cashel and near the extremity of the Dingle peninsula, there is a church unlike the chapel in proportions but agreeing with it in more matters of detail than any other building in the country. So much is this the case that the direct influence and inspiration of the more famous structure and closeness to it in date of erection can be accepted.



66. Kilmalkedar, Kerry Elevation, Plan, etc., of Church
(After Hill)

The original church—the relatively long chancel is somewhat later than the nave; added as an afterthought to it—consisted of a nave (27 feet 2 inches by 17 feet 3 inches: a length-breadth proportion of about 1.6 to 1, common to many Irish predecessors)



67. Kilmalkedar, Kerry Interior of Church looking NE.

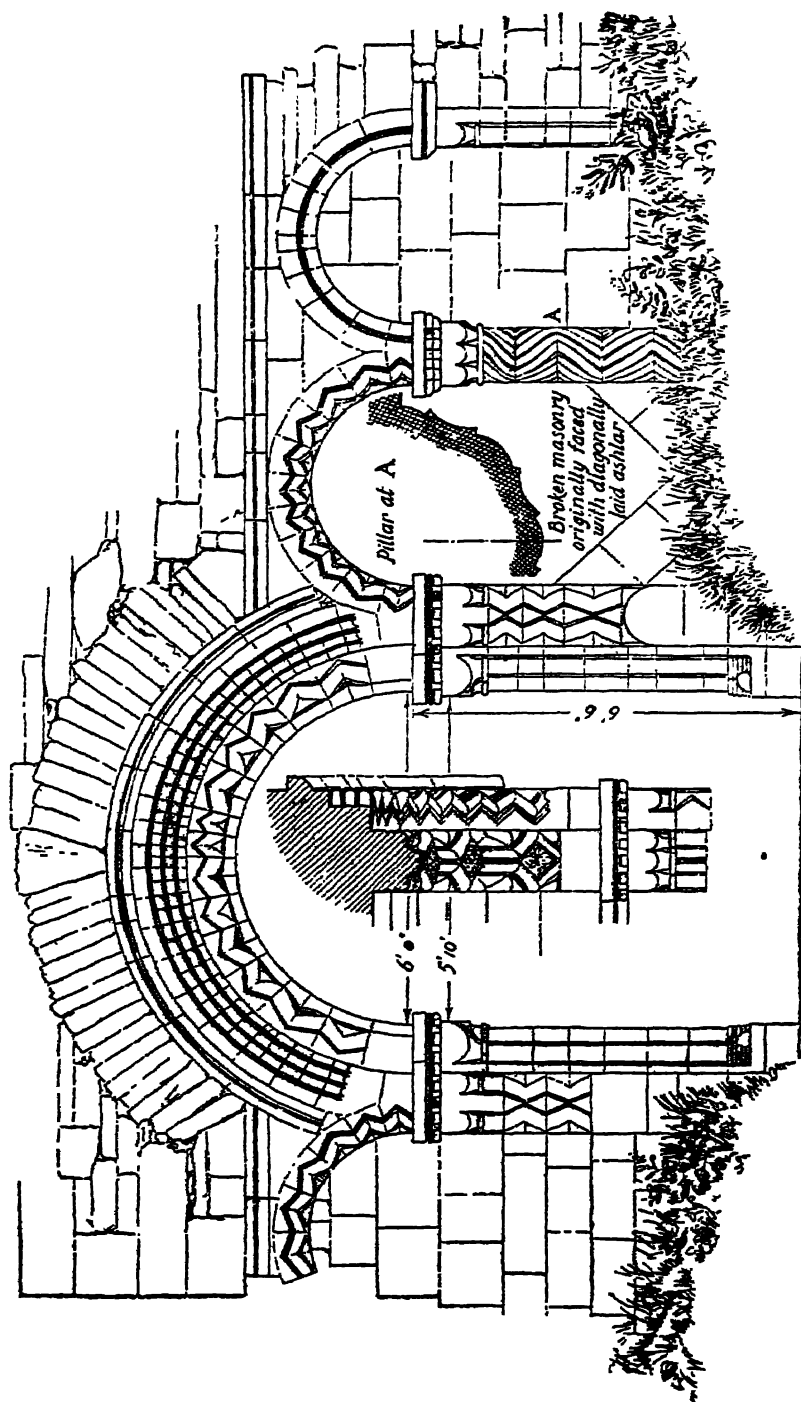
with antae and a short and narrow altar recess—an echo of the east end of Cashel? The walls of the building are battered, as those of Cormac's Chapel are not, and rise to gables of steep pitch. Only the lower courses of a corbelled stone roof remain, but if this was ever completed on the conjectural section given in Mr. Hill's monograph¹⁷ it could not have long survived without the aid of an internal structure of timber. Of this there is no surviving sign.

As in Cormac's Chapel there are wall arcades on both sides of the nave (67). Five half-round columns on each side divide the length of the wall into six bays, with respond pilasters at the east and west angles. The columns rise from a narrow shelf, wrought as a string-course, and have bases of very slight projection. The capitals are scalloped and project to the outer face of the two courses of chamfered corbelling which crown the interior walls. The level lines of the corbel courses are interrupted—and but slightly—only by the arched heads of two small windows, north and south, in the fifth bay eastwards. There is a round arch to the altar recess. It is of two orders; the inner a soffit rib chevroned on both faces and with a pattern of lozenges on the soffit. In detail it is practically identical with the soffit rib in the north porch at Cashel. The arch of first order has a roll moulding, bordered by a row of disks, a motive also to be found at Cashel. Jambs with engaged colonettes, deeply cut as at the parent structure, crowned by scalloped capitals, support this arch. Column bases throughout are, as usual, of small projection and recall several of the forms found in the larger work. Another feature (rare in Ireland) which the two buildings have in common is the tympanum; that at Kilmalkedar is in the west doorway. It is uncarved. But there is one point of difference: in Kilmalkedar the jambs of all the openings are inclined in the true Irish fashion. Very little remains of the barrel-vaulted altar recess and still less of the small side windows it once possessed. It has been stated¹⁸ that the fragments of splays which remain are not those of windows because, if they are continued outwards, they would strike points within the east wall face of the building. But something very like this survives from the

earliest work in the same part of Cormac's Chapel where the embrasures of the small loops were cranked eastwards to give what is little better than reflected light to the interior.

The chancel of this church (11 feet 4 inches by 16 feet 2 inches) is manifestly an addition but does not appear to be very much later in date. It also has parts of a stone roof remaining and, almost certainly, it was so covered; the span is much less than that of the nave and the structural problem much easier. In fact, in dimensions of width and in roof pitch, the chancel corresponds closely with the St. Macdara's Island Church (p. 30). Both sections of the church have eaves courses, chamfered on the top edge, and both are built in sandstone masonry of good sizes, the wrought work having very fine joints.

County Kerry has another relic deriving from the Cashel chapel: part of the original west front of the cathedral of Ardfert (68). It consists of a doorway flanked by blank arcades and stands in the west wall of the thirteenth century cathedral¹⁹. The unusually broad opening is in two orders, the inner arch a soffit rib chevroned on both faces, with a lozenge design on the soffit: a combination similar to but in detail coarser than the Cashel and Kilmalkedar examples. Triple-columned piers which have cushion and scalloped capitals carry this arch, but the outer arch—made up of the familiar pointing-out chevrons—rises from broad pilasters. The colonettes of these are curiously broken chevron-wise; a unique but ugly treatment. The abaci are billet moulded. To right and left of the door-opening is blank arcading; the southern bays—a pair—are complete but those to the left are now represented only by part of one arch. The outermost arch is merely moulded but those next to the doorway are chevroned. Central in the right arcade is a half-column, diagonally fluted in alternating directions on each of its five component stones. This column has a scalloped capital and billet-moulded abacus and the outer respond has a plain abacus over an engaged column with a small scalloped cap. The whole is a vigorous work despite the decay of the soft red sandstone of which it is composed.



68. Ardfer, Kerry W. Doorway of Cathedral
(After Hill)

It is notable that in the three buildings last discussed the columns and colonettes are expressed more boldly than in the works of Phase 2 thus far cited: they come nearer to detachment—are often full three-quarter and sometimes more than half-columns in plan. This bolder treatment is apparent in most of the examples in Phases 2 and 3 yet to be dealt with. An instance of it occurs in the well-known front of the church dedicated to St. Cronan at ROSCREA, Tipperary (Pl. VI, b), where all the vertical members are well expressed. In it also wall arcades flank the central doorway which has a high “tangent” gable recalling that to the north portal at Cashel, not only in proportions but in having rosette ornaments. These flank a much eroded, full-length figure of the saint. “Tangent” gables to each arch of the arcades echo that in the centre and the ribbon chevron is the main feature of all the arches. Purely Irish in most respects, and particularly in having antae, this church front recalls the wall-arcades of the Cashel exemplar. It is a fusion of native and imported elements.

Difficult to place because there is no other example quite like it is the doorway of the oratory of St. Flannan, beside the cathedral of KILLALOE (13). It has stout entire shafts set in the re-entrant of the first of its two orders. The arch over is moulded to a section which appears nowhere else in Ireland: a roll moulding flanked by a broad hollow very like one at Penmon, Anglesey²⁰ (15), and a type found in English work of c. 1140.²¹ Of the much worn capitals one has foliage; the other, an animal on each face with heads conjoined at the angle.

6. IRISH ROMANESQUE PHASE TWO *continued*

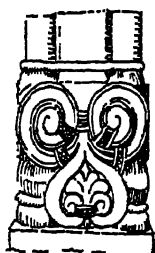
The more or less exotic Cashel chapel, and its more native derivatives having been dealt with, the consideration of Phase 2 of the style is resumed here.

The doorway of ULLARD church, Kilkenny, does not fit readily into the grouping adopted. It is bold in character but this quality may be due more to the material of which it is built: granite, which demands detail of a stronger, simpler character than

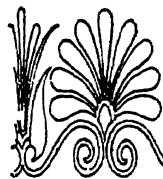
was attained in the good sandstone generally used. It originally had three orders but the inner one has been obliterated in a reconstruction of doubtful date. Only the two outer piers and arches remain unaltered. The engaged columns are unusually stout; the capitals have carvings of heads and the many-bossed abaci and hood-moulding are coarse. This latter member springs from large, ox-head stops, and has an animal head as keystone. Other keystones, of human mask form, appear in the arch rings. The second of these is of pointing-out chevrons—the ribbon—and the outer arch has chevrons on both face and soffit, the latter breaking joint, as it were, with the former.

Only the lower parts of the walls of the oratory of St. Molaise (16, 69), on DEVENISH, Lough Erne, Fermanagh, still stand. This little building has very thick walls (4 feet at the sides; 3 feet at the gables) and measures but $19\frac{1}{2}$ feet by 11 feet internally (1.77 to 1): longer in proportion than most early Irish buildings. Its few ornamental features: the bases of four slight, colonnetted antae, are carved in low relief with motives (69) clearly derived from the Classic honeysuckle. So Classic in feeling, indeed, are these features that a very early date has been ascribed to the structure. A factor militating against this argument is that the high-pitched stone roof, long destroyed, but still standing in part in the eighteenth century²² was of a well-developed type. Its construction was either true corbelling or of the pseudo-arch type of Cormac's Chapel. Its external finish was even more advanced than that of the Tipperary example; each course of its stonework was carefully wrought on the lower edge to provide a slight overhang or weathering. The appearance must have been one rather like that of slating. The end stones were ingeniously cut to give level coping lines. One other stone roof finish in Ireland—that of St. Macdara's Church (*supra* p. 30) shows these practical refinements of construction. The Devenish building is altogether more elaborated and must be datable more nearly to the mid-century than has been supposed.

Another example of bolder column treatment is the doorway of the small church at CLONKEEN, Limerick (70). The arch work

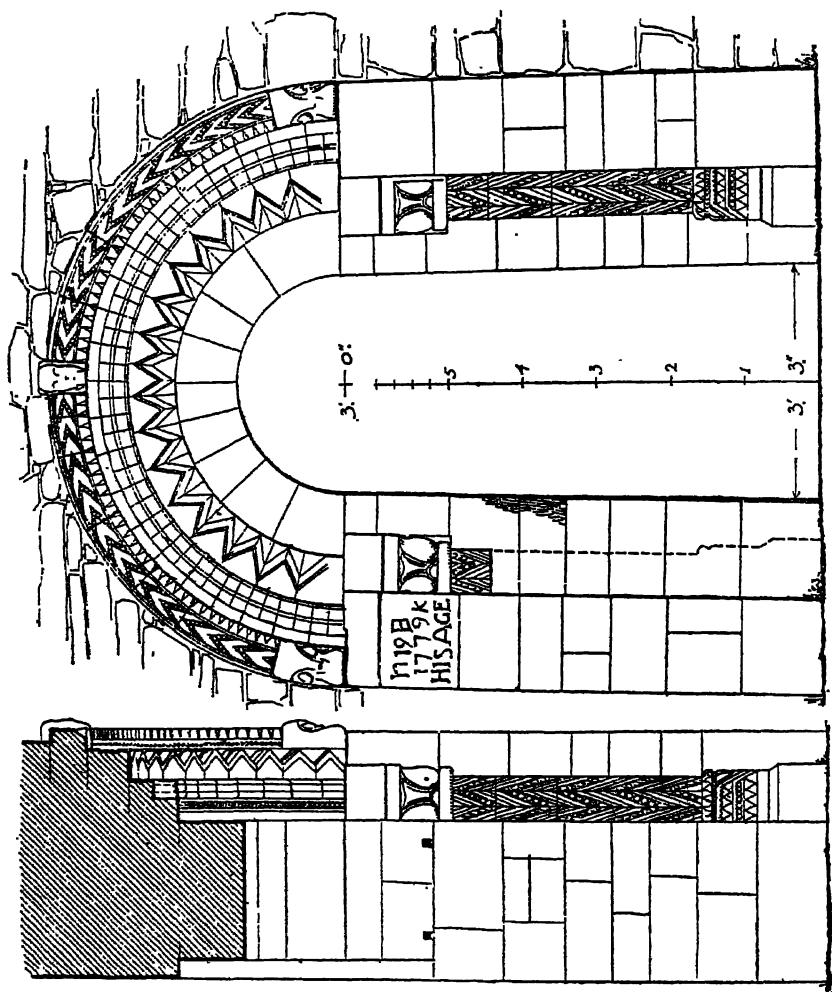


2 BASES, DEVENISH



CLASSICAL PALMETTE

69. Devenish
Fermanagh
Bases



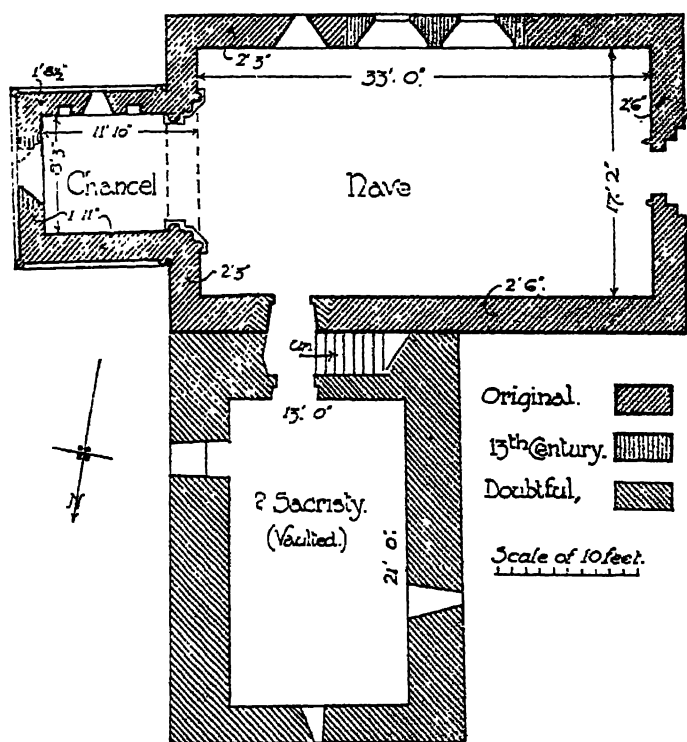
70. Clonkeen, Limerick Doorway of Church
(Leask: *North Munster Antiquarian Journal*)

has an early look; the superficial decoration of the hood-moulding (chevron and beads, barely incised on the face, and delicately-cut dentils along the edge) suggest that the door should have an early place in the phase; but the chevrons—point-out—which form the first ring and the normal but fairly bold chevrons on the second arch are to be found at all stages of the style. The capitals are very like those in the chancel arch at St. Caimin's, Iniscealtra, and though more refined could still be early. It is otherwise, however, with the almost full octagonal shafts which support them. They are not only not engaged in the real sense but are covered all over by a delicate pattern of zig-zag and beads. The square bases are uniquely decorated with bands of small triangles and rows of beads. Other features of the design, notably the ox-heads at each end of the hood are vigorous, but the plain side pilasters are hard to explain except on the assumption of their being repair or unfinished work.

The church structure is a simple rectangle without any structural division into nave and chancel; doubtless there was a timber screen between them originally. It measures 45 feet 4 inches in length internally which, with a breadth of 17 feet 9 inches, gives a ratio of over $2\frac{1}{2}$ to 1. In itself this suggests a relatively late date for the building. So also do the ornaments of the surviving inner jamb of the one original window (in the north wall): rolls and fillets combined with a band of beaded zig-zag ornament. The antae at both gables are examples of the late survival of these features (cf. also St. Cronan's Church at Roscrea). Two other windows are insertions of fifteenth-century style.

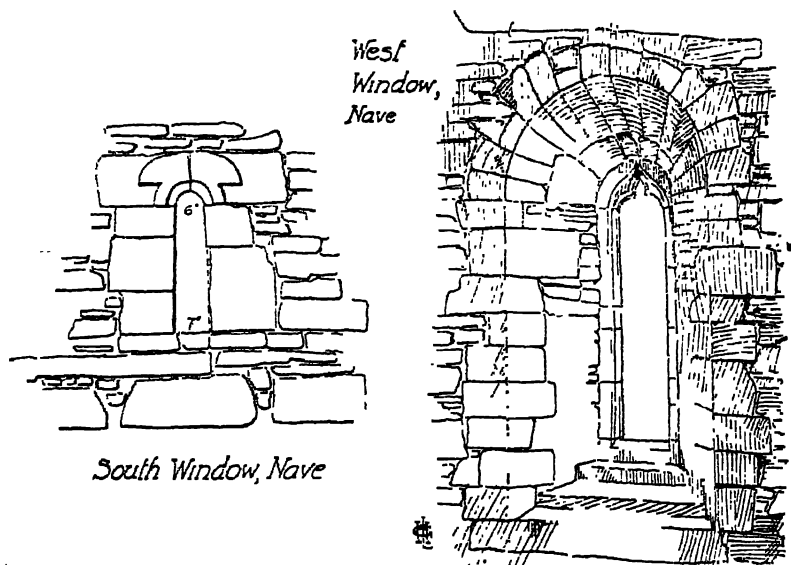
Perhaps no other church ruin in Ireland is so attractive in site, completeness, interesting detail and appearance as that at MONAINCHA, near Roscrea, Tipperary²³ (71 to 77). The site, once an island in a bog, is now a green mound in marshy pasture land. Properly its name is Inis-Locha-Cré; the island of Loch Cré. Though the earliest definite annalistic reference is *c.* 807, when an anchorite named Elair na hInsi died, it is clear—from other Saintly "Lives"—that there was a monastery on the island as early as the sixth century, connected with the famous Cainnech (Kenny) of

Aghaboe. All traces of the buildings of this foundation have disappeared; only the twelfth century church, together with a medieval addition to it, remain. The church (Plan, 71) has nave and chancel; the former just twice as long as broad and the chancel small and nearly square in plan. Both are excellently built in red sandstone masonry containing many long stones, but in the later annexe, a vaulted northern wing, the stonework is much inferior in quality. Certain alterations of the church belong to the thirteenth century: two windows on the south of the nave and an enlargement of the east window. Still later—fifteenth century—is the ogee-light inserted in the embrasure of the west window (72). In the south wall of the nave is a small window, very narrow, with inclined jambs, its head in two stones on which a curious hood is



71. Monaincha, Tipperary Plan of Church
(Leach: J.R.S.A.I.)

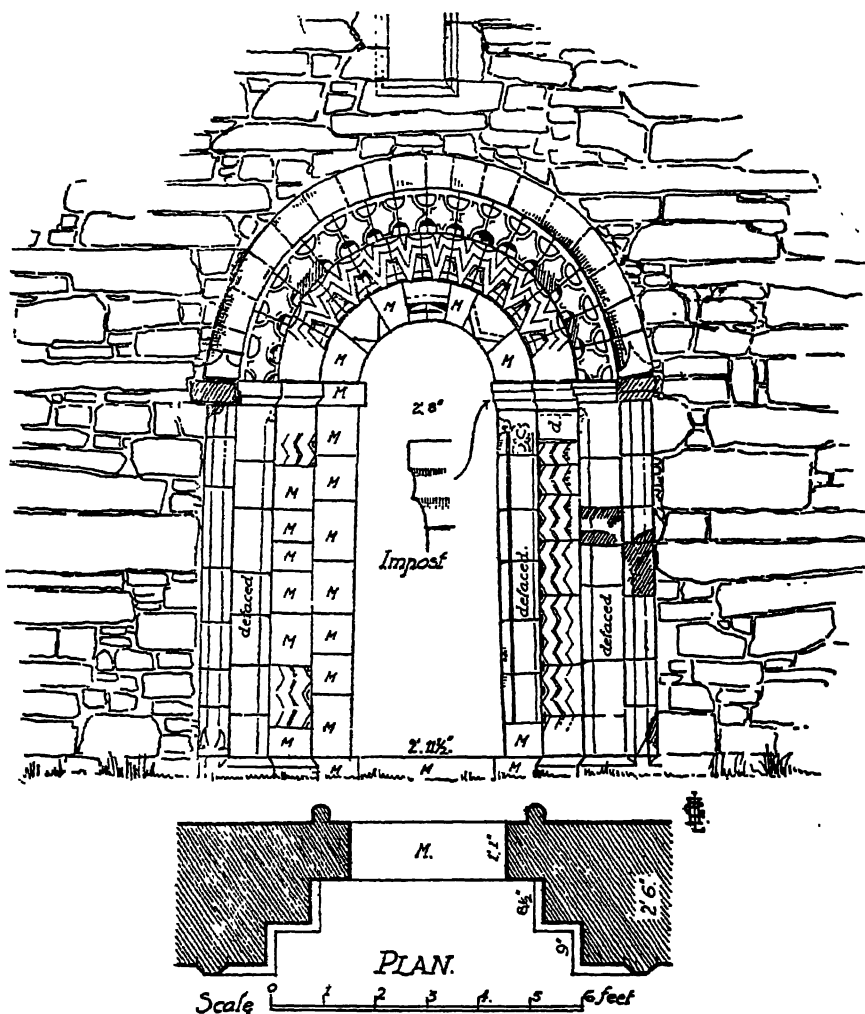
wrought in the solid (72). It splays widely inwards and is the only complete original window remaining.



72. Monaincha, Tipperary Windows of Church
(Leask: J.R.S.A.I.)

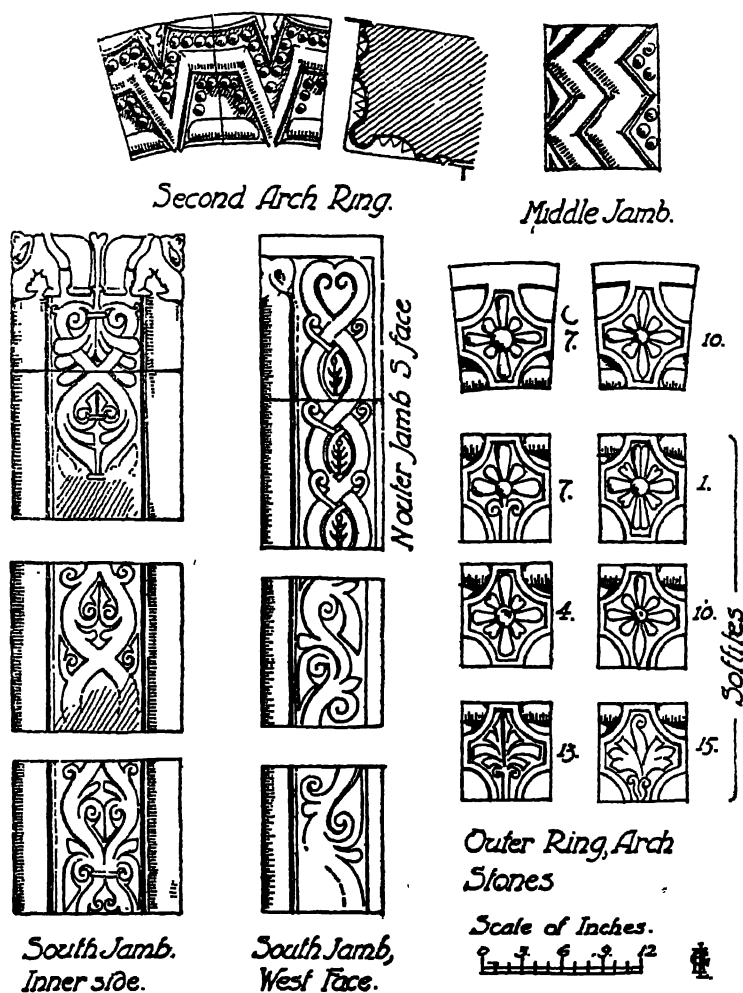
The interesting features are the west doorway (73, 74, 75) and the chancel archway (76, 77). The door has three-sided outer pilasters to its three, square-planned orders. On the top stone of the face of the southern pilaster is the beginning of a little-known inscription: "OR DO T. . .", and on the third stone up from the base two more letters: "O . . . F." Each of the inclined jambs of the opening is superficially decorated, and the first and third orders have rolls lightly worked on the arrisses. The decoration on both faces of the first jamb-order is greatly weathered but on the north side it was obviously a design based on the well-known vine scroll. Something similar, with a double strand, is to be seen on the upper stones of the south jamb. Better preserved scroll-work of a rather more formal character, with double strands and stylized leafage, occurs on the outer face and broad return face of the innermost jamb. The angle-rolls terminate at the top in the mouths of small

beasts. Chevron decoration covers both faces of the middle jamb and the abaci of two orders are of a late type with double hollow chamfers. A very bold hood-moulding, half-round in section,



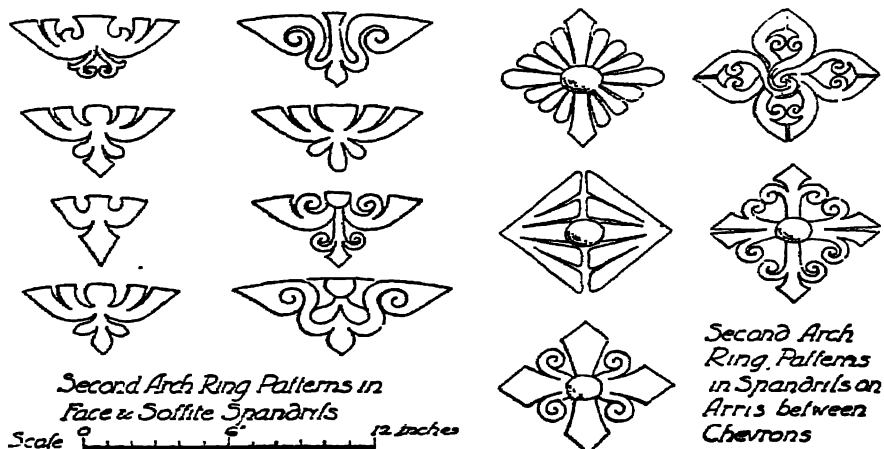
73. Monaincha, Tipperary West Doorway of Church
(Leask: J.R.S.A.I.)

almost bolster-like and once decorated all over, contains the arches. On the first of these appears a new decorative motive:

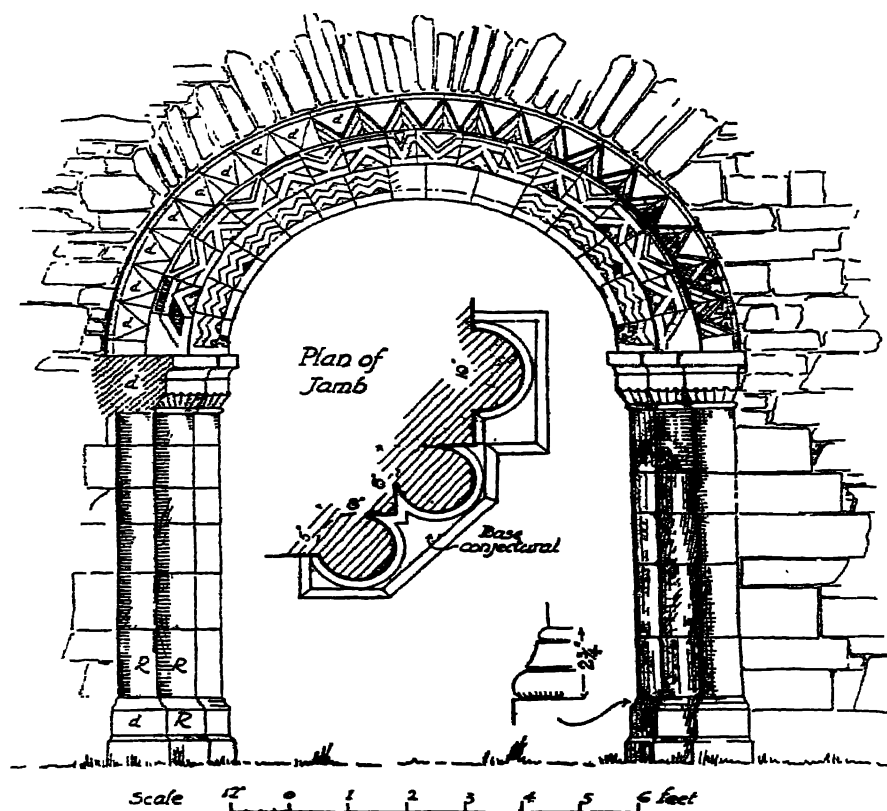


74. Monaincha, Tipperary Details of Church Doorway
(Leask: J.R.S.A.I.)

pateras in the form of a square with the angles cut off by quarter circles and with stylized leaf and flower forms as central decoration. The pateras repeat on the soffit and meet at the arris over an undercut roll. The second arch has also an arris roll, not undercut, but crossed by the points of the chevrons which are carved on face and soffit. These chevrons are of shallow roll section, bordered by

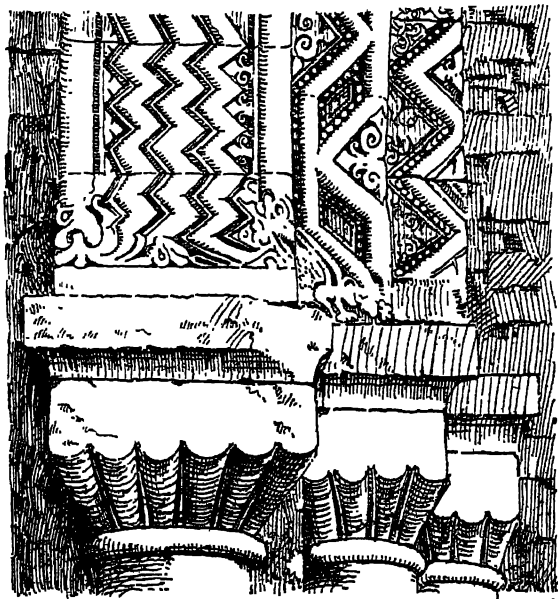


75. Monaincha, Tipperary Ornaments of Chancel Arch



76. Monaincha, Tipperary Chancel Arch of Church
(both Leash : J.R.S.A.I.)

beading, but do not adjoin one another in the usual way: they are connected at the base by curved continuations of the same section (cf. also Tomgraney, *infra*). The re-built inner arch had face and soffit chevrons alternating.

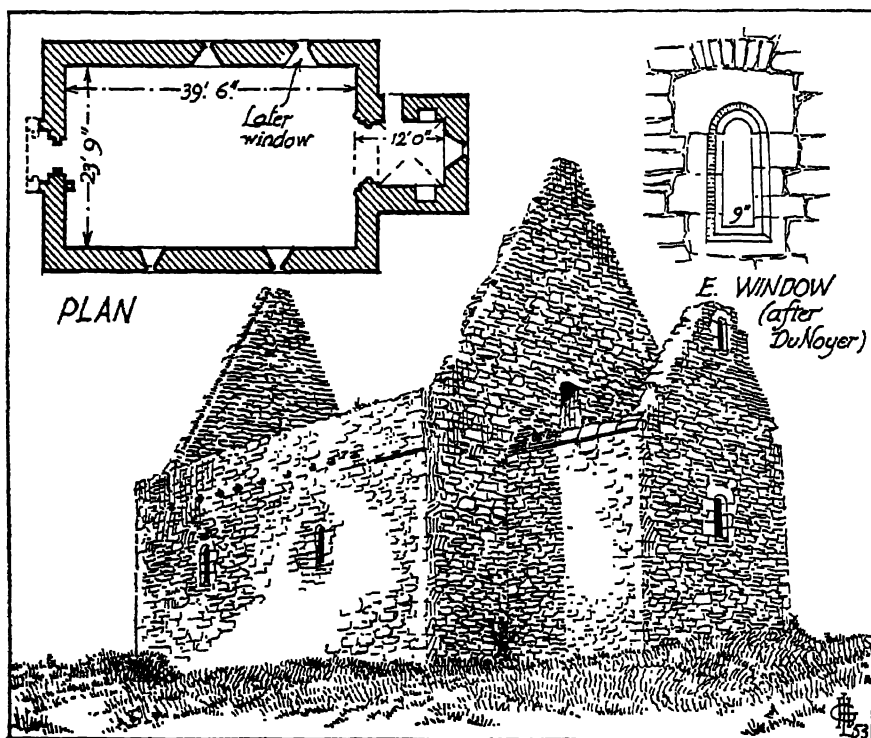


77. Monaincha, Tipperary
Capitals, etc., of Chancel Arch

Exceptionally fine in quality is the fine-jointed masonry of the chancel arch (76, 77) and its pillars. Each jamb is formed of two three-quarter columns and one half-column, slightly inclined inwards. They are quite undecorated and rise from slightly moulded bases on square, double plinths. The capitals are much scalloped and the abaci hollow chamfered. From them spring the arches, covered with a wealth of superficial decoration. On the face and soffit of the first order chevrons, outlined by beads and fillets, overlap the arris—fold round it, as it were—and in the spandrels are the usual stylized foliage patterns: simplified anthemions, etc. These occur in the spandrels of the second arch ring also, which has

a bolder chevron and roll decoration; straight sections alternating with the angular motive. On both face and soffit of the inner ring is multiple chevrons of low relief and an arris roll, both terminating in animal features (77).

The Monaincha doorway is an example of the invasion of the jambs by decoration. Another is the west door at the church of DONAGHMORE, in Tipperary, not far from Clonmel. The



78. Donaghmore, Tipperary Plan and View from S.E.

church itself (78) is also a complete nave and chancel structure, lacking only the arch rings of the portal to its small chancel and the outer part, which was almost a porch, of its west door. Its windows are few and simple but the entrance was originally a fine feature. It had a "tangent" gable and stood out over a foot from the



X CLONFERT CATHEDRAL, GALWAY
North Jamb of West Doorway
(see p 137)

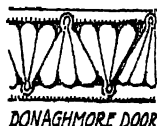


XI. CLONFERT CATHEDRAL, GALWAY

Gable of West Doorway

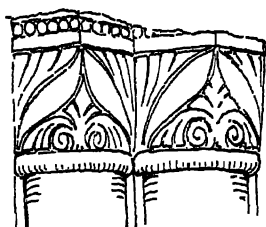
(see p 137)

church wall. A deep, almost tunnel-like arch had a soffit rib at the mid-point of its depth and there must have been half-column supports for this rib on the side jambs. Parts of the two inner door jambs remain and show decoration on every surface. Chevrons, spandrel ornaments, interlaces, beading and the like are all present and even the fascias of the abaci are delicately ornamented (81). An angle colonette is five-sided and had zig-zag grooves filled with beading and a narrow band of leafage, based on an angular fret (79) also makes its appearance (cf. Clonfert for another occurrence).



DONAGHMORE DOOR

79

DONAGHMORE: CHAN^l ARCH
(after DuNoyer).

80

The elaboration of this doorway is evidence of lateness in date but the relative simplicity of the pillars of the chancel archway seems to be an evidence in the other direction. There can be no doubt, however, that both features are coeval. While the arches are gone the piers and some capitals (80) remain; capitals which have a superficial resemblance to those at St. Caimin's and Clonkeen but are really finer in detail.

The master-work of the style, but by no means the latest, is the portal of the cathedral of St. Brendan at CLONFERT, Galway (Frontispiece; Pls. X and XI; 82, 83); the culmination of Phase 2 in the grouping adopted. It is quite breath-taking in its beauty and is highly individual in design, standing almost as much apart from other examples as does the Chapel of Cormac. Though not large by the standard of the continental or even the larger British doorways of the period, it is the largest amongst the Irish examples, measur-

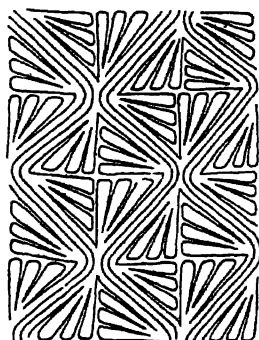
From
DONAGHMORE DOOR

81

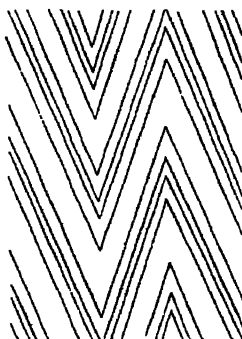
ing over 13 feet in maximum width at the ground line and about twice that dimension in height to the apex of its gable pinnacle. Built entirely of a mellow red sandstone it has, of course, suffered, but not so much as might be expected, in the nearly 800 years of exposure to wind and weather which have elapsed since its erection. Indeed, its date is not recorded by any of the annalists who confine themselves to the early history of St. Brendan's monastery and to the more tragic happenings—burnings and plunderings—which Clonfert suffered nine times between the mid-seventh and the late twelfth century. One of the former took place in 1164; a date which cannot be far away from that of the doorway. There was a noted church builder, Conor O'Kelly, prince of Hy Many—the district in which Clonfert stands—who is credited with the erection of many churches about the year 1167. It is much more likely that he was the noble patron responsible rather than Bishop Peter O Mordha, the Cistercian monk who held the see for some years prior to his death, by accidental drowning, in 1171. This was the opinion of Mr. Brash²⁴ who seems not to have realized that a Cistercian, at that time, would never have sanctioned such an architectural extravagance as this fine portal.

The broad outer pilasters and the five succeeding orders of engaged columns which form the jambs have a strong inward inclination (nearly a half-inch in every foot of height) which is more pronounced than that in any other Irish doorway. They support, in turn, the start of the high-pitched pediment—of the "tangent" gable type—the hood-moulding and the arch orders. The gable is filled with a blank arcade, surmounted by a triangle of diaper design, itself triangular and verged by a double roll or rather cable mouldings which finish in an apex pinnacle flanked by carvings of heads.

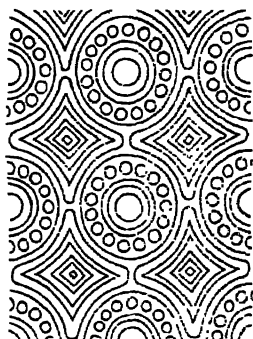
Most remarkable is the rich decoration which covers, like a veil, the surface of every member of the composition, the only undecorated parts being the background of the pediment arcade and the spandrels below it. Some of the numerous and varied motives are unique to this example, and the chevron is noticeably absent from



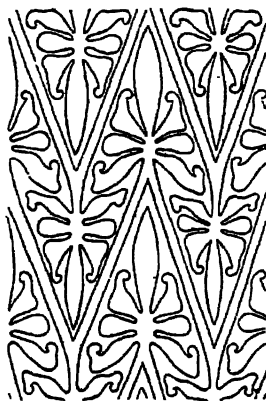
a.



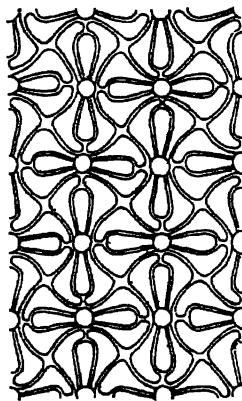
b.



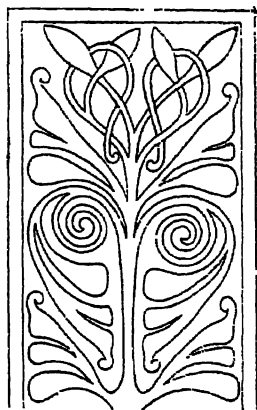
c.



d.



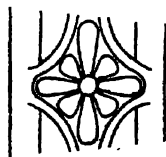
e.



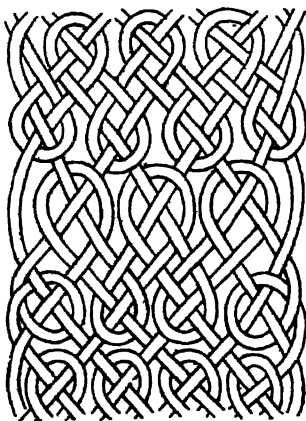
f.



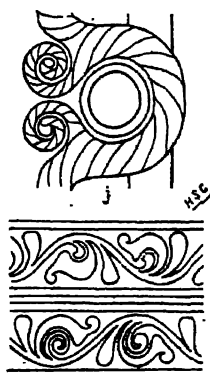
h.



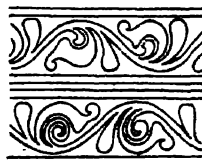
i.



g.



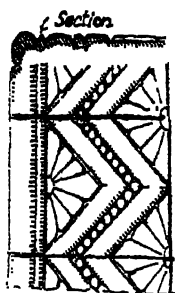
j.



k.

2 Feet.

the arch rings; it appears, indeed, only as a zig-zag in the decoration of two columns. The decorative treatments of the supporting members are well shown in the illustrations (Pls. X and XI, 82). The outer pilaster face is covered by a fine figure-of-eight interlacement and its inner return face by a zoomorphic interlace; the flat surface of the pier which bears the first arch order has a stylized, free-flowing foliage design and on its engaged column is the motive (f, 82) unique and not concisely describable. The succeeding octagonal and round engaged-columns (the former really showing but five faces) show, in order inwards, a series of narrow chevrons extending into palmettes (d, 82), a diaper of small circles enriched with beads (c, 82), a zig-zag of flattened roll and angular fillet section (b, 82), and a pattern suggestive of an angular fret with leafage instead of the usual keys (a, 82). This last is also to be seen on a capital of the Nuns' Church at Clonmacnoise and as a running ornament at Donaghmore. The capitals also are varied: a dragon head grips the top of the first column (as on a smaller scale at Monaincha and Clonmacnoise); cat-like masks, grinning and grim; three horse (?) heads; another dragon and three heads which are long-eared and may represent asses. Instead of domical or bud-like bosses these features of the Clonfert abaci—over fifty in number—are all animal heads of various kinds and expressions, some even comic. The fascias above them bear a graceful running foliage scroll (k, 82). There was, almost certainly, another order of pier and arch in the original design and the same material, but its place has been usurped by a doorcase in the Gothic of the fifteenth century (or a little later) and the blue-grey limestone which was so much in favour at that period. The broad chamfer of its piers and arch is carved with stiff vine leaves and the figures of two ecclesiastics, apparently an abbot and a bishop.



CLONFERT CATH.
FRAGMENTS (JAMB?)

Within in the doorway are preserved some ornamented chevron stones (83), sharply carved and quite unweathered. They appear to be jamb stones of a large opening, perhaps of the chancel archway displaced in the XVth century by the existing work.

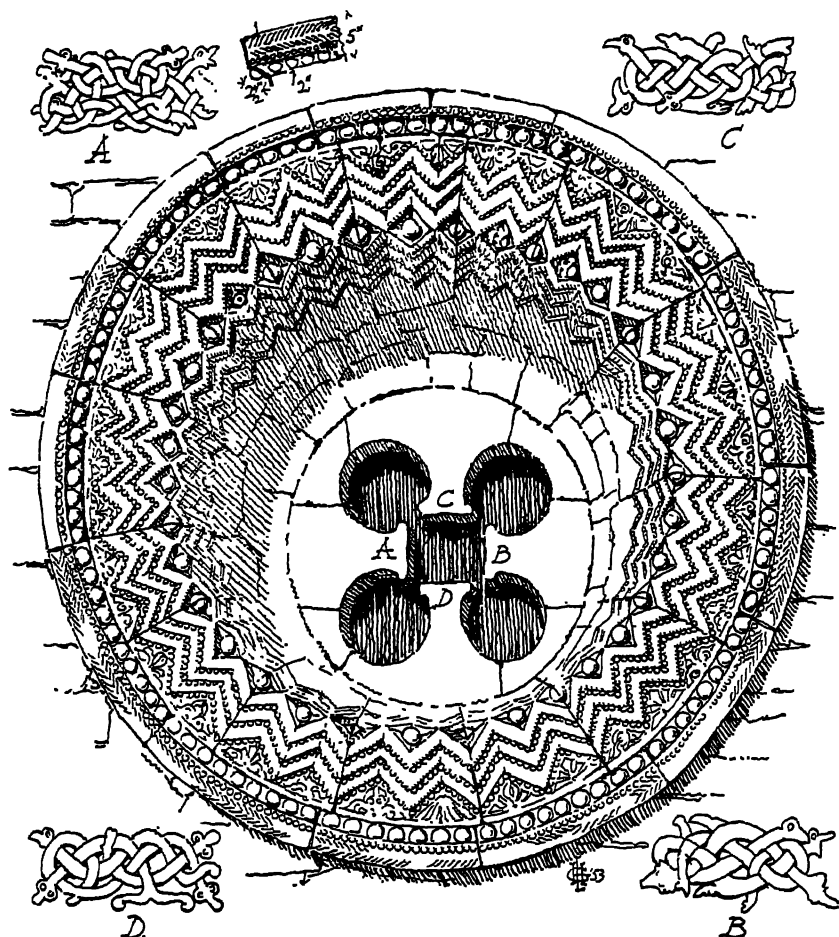
Bolder in their effect are the semicircular arch-rings, seven in number if the hood-moulding be included among them, three of them with motives found nowhere else in the Irish style. A hood-moulding of half-round section (as at Monaincha) springs from the inner angle of the outer pilasters and is covered with fine interlacing ornament. The next succeeding ring is part of the outer order of arches and coincides with the flat face below, a kind of secondary outer pilaster. It is made up of thirty hemispherical bosses, all of them superficially carved in very low relief; they are much weathered but a palmette design is clearly visible on one and interlacements on others. Completing the order are twenty-seven separate voussoirs, each carved on face and soffit with a design which appears nowhere else in Ireland: "a cable moulding, curving backwards and forwards in horseshoe form round circular bosses."²⁵ The cables have spiral appendages (j, 82). The ornaments of the second arch order are also unique to Clonfert: pateras in pairs, on face and soffit; one of each pair with the centre hollowed out, the other ornamented with a rosette or triskelion. On the third arch we meet again the motives of the first order of the Monaincha doorway: square pateras with hollowed corners and an undercut roll moulding within (i, 82) the arris. The next order is more conventional and will be met with again in Phase 3: beast heads, one to each voussoir, gripping an undercut roll. Lastly is the innermost arch of which each stone is carved with a very elegant palmette (h, 82) quite classical in character, the arris of the ring being hollowed away to throw the design into prominence.

The tall pediment (Pl. XI) is very striking and in several respects unique. It has its points of origin, in the physical sense, in three courses of stone work, carved all over with interlacements, which rise from the abaci of the outer pilasters. They look like extensions of the pilasters below but incline a little more and overhang them to north and south. The steep-pitched verges of the pediment hug the extrados of the hood very closely and are composed of twin cable mouldings, with a "strand" of beading, and separated by a fillet. They have a bold, "quick" twist. These cables,

which twist in opposite directions, spring from animal heads and converge to meet under a rotund boss. From this rises a tapering pinnacle, flanked at the apex by two human masks. The face of the pediment is divided into two parts by a narrow, bead-decorated string course. In the upper part are fifteen triangular panels, disposed in five courses or storeys (five/four/three/two/one) and ten sunk panels: triangles inverted. The former have superficial decorations of stylized leafwork and the latter are filled with human masks. Seven of these are bearded, three beardless, and each has the individuality which suggests a portrait. Below this great diaper is the outstanding feature of the pediment: a small arcade of five arches, scroll-decorated on the face; and six half-pillars with varied capitals and much-worn, differing surface decorations. The shallow bases rest upon another bead-decorated string which, in turn, lies upon the extrados of the hood-moulding. Heads or human masks peer out from beneath the arches; two others from nooks beside the outer pillars: and three more have places in the spandrels to right and left of the hood-moulding.

So individual is this supreme example of Irish architectural art that one feels it must be the work of a master of genius whose lesser achievements, unfortunately, we cannot trace unless, perhaps, Monaincha and Donaghmore be among them.

Round windows, forerunners of the elaborate roses of the Gothic style, are not of very common occurrence in the Romanesque of north-western Europe, and are still rarer in Britain. Ireland has but one Romanesque example: that set high in the eastern gable of the larger church at RAHAN, Offaly (84). It gives a little light to the upper part of the vault over the chancel—what was the croft in the original building (46, *supra*)—but it seems altogether too grand a feature for this quite minor purpose. Moreover, the appearance of the surrounding rough walling and the manner in which some of the wrought stones have moved out of position are indications of a rebuilding. The conjecture that it was originally a feature of the west gable of the nave—a position more probable than the present one—seems not unwarranted. This part of the



84. Rahan, Offaly Round Window in E. Gable of larger Church

church was rebuilt on the old foundations in the eighteenth century, the period to which the re-roofing of the chancel at its present low pitch may also be assigned. (If it be argued that builders or restorers in the 1700's had little respect for ancient features, the case of the twelfth century arch re-erected in the eighteenth century church at WICKLOW (96, *infra* p. 160-1) may be cited to the contrary effect.)

The round window measures, externally, seven and a half feet in diameter over all of its five-inches-wide border moulding which

has upon its fascia a very lightly wrought, continuous, fern-like motive and a band of minute beads or pearls. Many bold, hemispherical bosses project from the chamfer. On the faces of the voussoirs and of their splayed returns are thirty-six chevrons, made up of three flattish rolls, separated and bounded by lines of fine beading. The spandrels are filled with anthemion derived and other motives in a great variety of designs. Most of the not very deep notchings of the arris have small, central bosses, flanked by beads, but two, at least, have little human masks instead and in a few others there are floral ornaments. The deep, splayed embrasure is closed by the window proper: flat stonework pierced by a very boldly cusped quatrefoil having four lightly etched zoomorphic ornaments (A, B, C, D)—only discernible at close quarters—near the recurved points of the cusps. (84) shows one chevron too few.

The delicacy of the over-all enrichment of this little masterpiece, combined with the very slight notching of the arris, suggests a place for it in Phase 2. On the other hand the designs of the spandrel ornaments—almost as varied as those in the late twelfth century window at ANNAGHDOWN, Galway (Pl. XVIII b, 92 and 93, *infra*, p. 157)—and the cusping of the actual window opening, are suggestive of a late date. On balance the end of Phase 2 appears to be an acceptable position.

(There is also a round window over the Freshford doorway. It may be a restoration of old work but it is certainly quite modern in style and workmanship.)

7. IRISH ROMANESQUE PHASE THREE

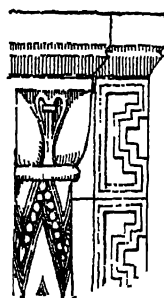
Delicate superficial ornament, disposed without detriment to the purity of the line of pier or arch, has been postulated as characteristic of Phase 2 examples. Even in them, however, there are signs, here and there, of a desire to achieve bolder effects: by chevron rolls more vigorously modelled—more detached from the background; by the same much used motive being made to stand out by the cutting away of edges or by ingenious combinations and alternations. More varied effects of light and shade were thus



XII RAHAN, OFFALY
West Doorway of smaller church
(see p. 145)

attained. The vertical supports—piers and columns—tend to become less engaged; to stand as complete shafts in the recesses of the orders; voussoirs are individually wrought into animal or bird heads, usually gripping a continuous, undercut roll-moulding in their jaws, as in the fourth arch of the Clonfert door, and the door arch of the Nuns' Church at Clonmacnoise, for instance. These, in their strongest expression, are the principal points of detail which distinguish the latest phase. But the differences in detail between the two phases do not add up to very much: it is the greater emphasis and vigour given to them which mark the later phase.

The much altered and mis-restored doorway of the cathedral at AGHADOE, Kerry, is a borderline case. The chevroned arch ring of its second order is very similar to the same feature at Clonkeen church, as is the zig-zag ornamented free shaft and capital of the outer jamb, but the embattled ornament on jamb of the second order (85) together with the consideration that the door probably belongs to the church erected in 1158 (see p. 82 *supra*) warrant the inclusion of this example, at an early stage in Phase 3.



AGHADOE DOOR

85

In the west wall of the smaller church at RAHAN, Offaly (Rahan II for convenience), a structure apparently rebuilt in the fifteenth century and incorporating materials from an older building, is an interesting doorway (Pl. XII). It is made of the hard, blue-grey limestone of the Irish central plain and its details are still sharp and clear. The single arch is deeply notched to express the chevrons of face and soffit but the spandrel ornaments are in the familiar low-relief technique. A hollow-chamfered hood of late style terminates in beast-head stops and the abaci are of the same section but narrower. Scalloped capitals, with low relief ornament on the pleatings, crown the inclined jambs which have engaged columns worked on them. The bases are of small projection and stand on chamfered plinths. To right and left, in the position of an outer order, similar bases project from the wall: they carried—or were intended to carry—round shafts whose only function would be to support the ends of the hood-moulding. (Shafts with the same function exist at Clonmacnoise, where, however, the hood-moulding

of the west door of the Nuns' Church is broader and projects further than at Rahan II).

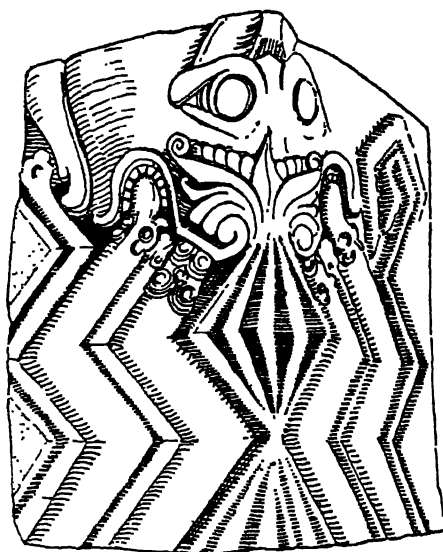
A similar treatment of the chevron in arch rings distinguishes the fourth order in the splendid doorway from Trinity Island, Lough Oughter, Cavan, which is now the vestry door of the modern cathedral at KILMORE (Pls. XIII and XIV). First re-erected in the older (seventeenth century) church there, it was removed to its present position about 1860 and has suffered change in the double process: the inclination of its jambs has been "corrected" and the stones of the innermost re-assembled inaccurately. The doorway is of four orders. The first arch, beneath a boss-decorated hood, is of square section with a roll on the arris and a running chevron on each face; the second arch is made up of point-out chevrons; the third of bold chevrons, with a continuous roll appearing deep in the notches, all as at Rahan II. Most notable about this doorway is the markedly Scandinavian character of the decoration on both faces of the innermost arch and the return faces of the jambs. Equally of far northern inspiration are the dragon-head capitals of the three stout, engaged-columns of the outer orders. The inner jamb and arch are square in plan with a slight arris roll, and on the face and soffit of the latter is interlaced ornament of narrow and bifurcating broader strands: the vertebral or chain pattern of Norway, found so much in Viking memorials in the Isle of Man and on Northumbrian crosses. The zoomorphic interlacements in the panels of the inner jamb are also Scandinavian. Kilmore, though showing more of the motives of Viking art than any other single Irish architectural work, is by no means the only example which shows this influence; it has been noted already in a capital at Killeslin and will be met with again at Clonmacnoise and other places.

One feature of the NUNS' CHURCH at Clonmacnoise (Pl. XV and 61 *supra*) has already been noted; the Phase 2 piers of the chancel arch. The arches which these piers support and also the west doorway as a whole, belong, almost certainly, to the "completion" of 1166. On both faces of the square-sectioned first arch

ring is a double roll chevron, with lines of beading; small bosses—heads and the like—fill the arris spandrels but the others, plain and deeply sunk, have deep, round sinkings in them; a treatment occurring in no other example. In the second arch order the stout arris roll expands lozenge-wise on alternate voussoirs, and on face and soffit is a similar alternation of roll and chevron. Lines of beads border the rolls and there are low-relief spandrel ornaments in this ring and the third arch. The latter is the most spectacular and, it may be said, the least architectural of the arches, since it has no arris because of the deep cutting (partial under-cutting) of the opposed chevrons of face and soffit. Palmettes in low relief decorate the spandrels. The three orders are bounded by a hood-moulding ornamented with a running chevron. Half-round shafts, of which only the bases and lower parts remain, supported this member, as apparently was intended to be the case at Rahan II.

There are similar supports to the ends of the broad, strongly projecting and boss-ornamented hood-moulding of the sturdily-membered western doorway of the church. Excluding them, it is of three orders. The arch of the first is of point-out, ribbon chevron voussoirs and that of the second order is made up of a series of animal masks through the open jaws of which passes an undercut roll. Both the jambs and the arch of the inner order are quite plain. In the restoration of 1865 new unmoulded voussoirs and the like were inserted in the place of missing originals. Mercifully, the inclination of the jambs was retained. The second jamb order is an engaged-column capped by a dragon head of the Scandinavian type found at Kilmore and on both faces of the third jamb is a double zig-zag vanishing, serpent-headed, into the jaws of another dragon, as on the stone missing from the top of the north jamb (86).

There is but one other nave and chancel church at Clonmacnoise (excluding the cathedral, into the single chamber of which a chancel structure was inserted): it is ST. FINGHIN'S (87) made remarkable by its Round-Tower belfry. The chancel of the church is small and almost square (8 feet 6 inches by 8 feet 8 inches) and its nave relatively long and narrow (29 feet by 14 feet 5 inches:



86. Clonmacnoise, Offaly
Carved Fragment from West Doorway of the Nuns' Church
(*Leash : North Munster Antiquarian Journal*)

a proportion of just 2 to 1). This is ruined to within a few feet of the ground but the chancel is more complete. The two parts are apparently the work of the period, *c.* 1160-70. The east window is small, round-headed and splays but slightly inwards. There was also a window in the south wall of the chancel, over an ambry and piscina. The chancel arch, now less than 6 feet in width, has three orders of jamb and arch—the innermost of quite late date—and taking the place of the original. Despite mutilation it is discernible that the first and second jamb orders have colonettes but the latter also has beak-head carvings. The first arch is simply moulded and the second chevroned. Also of three orders was the south doorway of the nave, of which only the lower parts of the jambs remain. The outer order is square, the second has a roll moulding and the inner order has chevrons.

The very striking feature of the church is the belfry, in the form of a Round Tower and of something more than half the



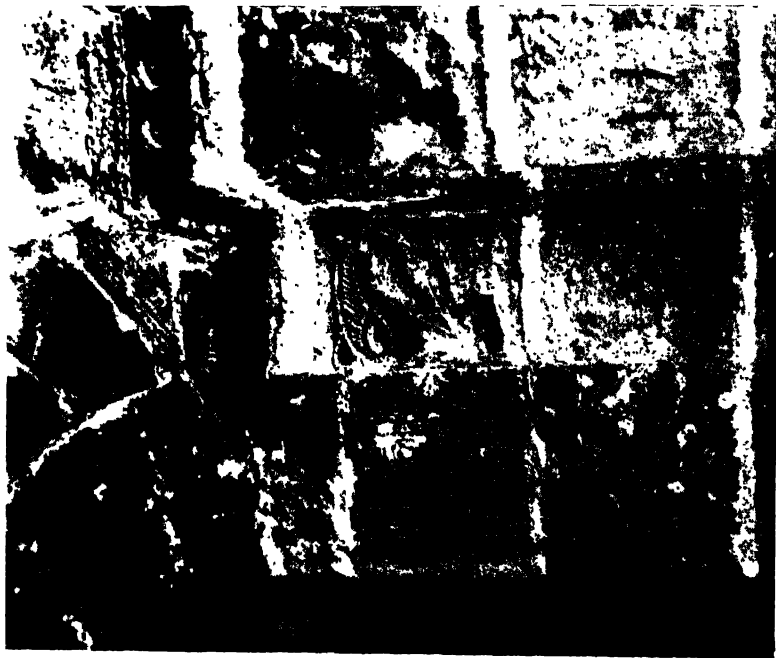
XIII KILMORE, CAVAN

Doorway from Trinity Island, L. Oughter, in Cathedral

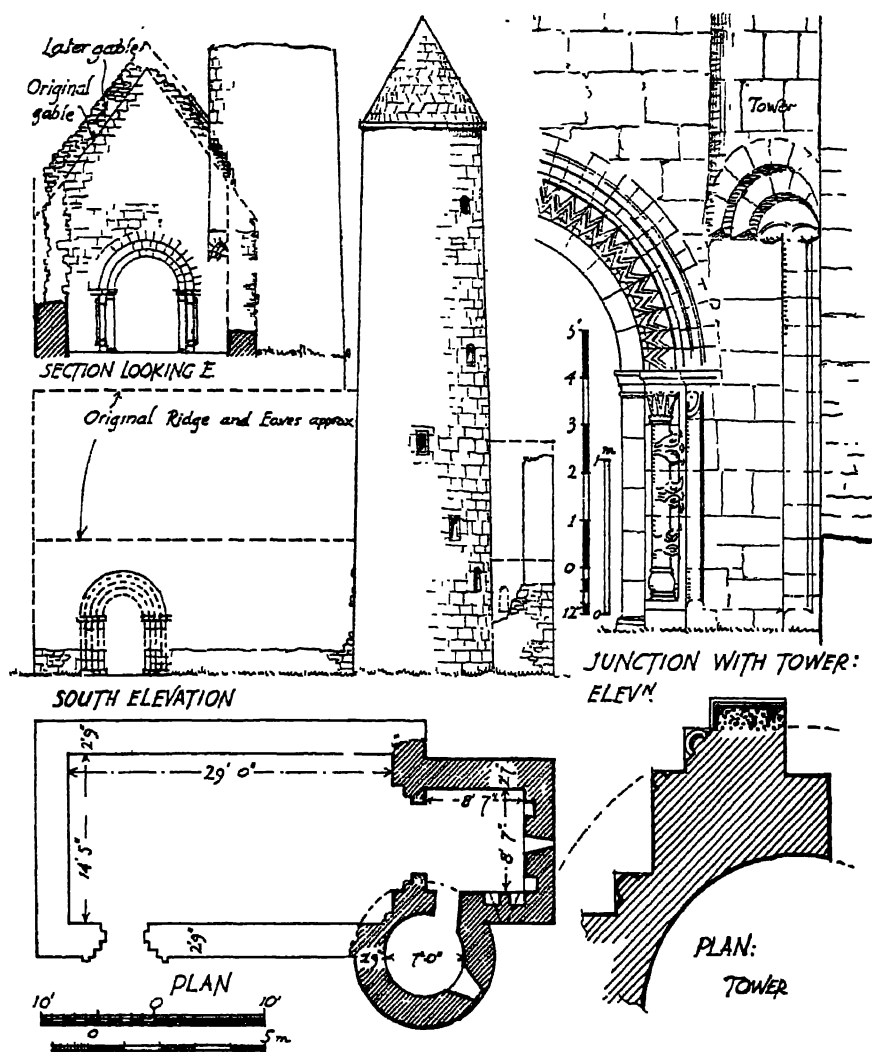
(see p. 146)



XIVa KILMORE, CAVAN
Details of doorway
(see p 146)



XIVb. KILMORE, CAVAN
Details of Doorway
(see p 146)



87. Clonmacnoise, Offaly St. Finghin's Church

dimensions of the average examples of these remarkable buildings. It is quite complete, beautifully built in squared ashlar of sandstone and covers and rises from the southern junction of the nave and chancel. Measuring $12\frac{1}{2}$ feet in basal diameter and $2\frac{1}{2}$ feet less at the eaves-course (48 feet over ground level) the apex of its conical

roof is about 56 feet over the base. As in other towers of the type this roof is corbel-built but, in this case, each course is made up of rhomboidal blocks, with the "vertical" joints sloping in opposite directions in adjoining courses. This gives a herring-bone effect. The entrance is at floor level within the chancel and there are seven windows; four round-headed and three with lintels. All but one are in sunk panels or casements. In the case of the fourth window above the ground, a flat-headed opening, the casement has a round top. All the windows are in the south-east of the tower—looking away from the church—and the two belfry openings are not as highly positioned as is usual.

While the now moribund Round Tower controversy went on some writers laboured to prove that this belfry existed before the building of the church, but there can be no reasonable doubt that both are contemporary in the sense that the tower was designed from the first and was almost certainly begun when the main walls of the church had been finished or nearly so. The foundations of church and tower are continuous; the squinch arches carrying the latter over the angle of the nave are not insertions; and all the windows face away from the church instead of successively to different points of the compass as is usual in Round Towers. Detailed arguments, too long to be included here, may be found in Macalister²⁶ who went into the matter very closely. It only remains to add that one of the arguments adduced for pre-existence of the tower is the crude manner in which its wall was cut into at the junction with the church roof slopes. It does not seem to have been noticed that this "hacking"—it is little better—is at the level of a roof later and higher than the original, as is evident in an examination of the masonry of the middle gable. In what manner the joints between the roof slopes and the tower were made is a matter for conjecture; the practical staunching of this junction must have posed a serious problem. Lead was used as a roof covering in seventh-century Northumbria and the lead-covered great church of Armagh was burned in 1020—this material may well have been

available and in use in twelfth-century Clonmacnoise. At DYSERT O'DEA, Clare, the much altered church had a chancel arch of plain type, if we may judge from its only remains: some jamb-stones used in the pedestal of the re-erected twelfth-century cross which stands near by. These stones show arris rolls finishing in serpent heads. The most striking feature of the church is the doorway now in its south wall. Obviously a reconstruction (of the west door of the original church?), and a far from satisfactory one, it has interesting elements. First is the outer arch ring made up of voussoirs with carved human and animal heads (the latter gripping roll mouldings) evidently parts of two arches of differing radii; the second is the unusual design of the third arch, found nowhere else—but dimly recalling the innermost arch at Clonfert—which might be described as a sort of minor arcading. Round and eight-sided shafts with twist, zig-zag, foliage and interlace decoration support carved abaci, not all of which are original. While the minor details are full of interest and the elements show that the original work was an imposing one, the result of the reconstruction—possibly carried out so long ago as the fifteenth century or even earlier—is unfortunate and incoherent.

Another doorway which has been reconstructed—almost certainly in the thirteenth century—is that in the south wall of ST. FLANNAN'S Cathedral at KILLALOE, Clare (Pl. XVII). This fine cruciform church was begun, at the earliest, near the end of the twelfth century, probably at the instance of the son of King Donald Mor O'Brien. It is usually attributed to that church-building monarch, founder of the cathedral at Limerick. He succeeded to the kingship in 1168 and it is more than probable that his work at Killaloe is represented by this fine doorway only. In the exuberance of its decoration and form it is not only royal but more reasonably datable to about 1180 than to the date of *c.* 1080 to which it has frequently been ascribed.²⁷ In elaboration it exceeds any other Irish doorway, even that of Clonfert, where the decoration no more than veils the members. At Killaloe, on the other hand, the members are not merely enriched; they are vigor-

ously modelled. The master motive, the chevron, is boldly wrought in several combinations, and two orders of the jambs are scalloped and chevroned elaborately. The whole effect is very rich and has an exuberance quite "Baroque."

The first arch has a continuous, bead-bordered chevron roll on both faces; the second is made up bold chevrons, alternating point-down and point-out on face and soffit respectively—the apices of the soffit chevrons coming between those on the face. In the deep hollow of the third arch are carvings of heads and animals, much damaged, and on both faces of the fourth are chevrons alternating and connected by curved rolls. There is a roll on the arris.

The deep abaci are greatly defaced and the capitals below them, less damaged, are scalloped and decorated with animals and foliage. It is the first and third jamb orders which are mostly boldly carved; square in plan, their angles are much cut away by deep notchings which, on the first order, take the form of curved chevrons. On the third jamb the notches are of straight chevron form with a few curved notches between them. The surfaces of the round shafts of the second order have a surface diaper of zig-zags, slightly hollowed, forming lozenges delicately carved. The innermost jamb remains only on the right-hand side. Square in plan, it is carved in the semblance of two extremely elongated beasts of very Scandinavian aspect, whose thin bodies form the arisses and branch at the top into double, dragonsque, heads. Every unmoulded space in this remarkable work is decorated with amazingly varied patterns of foliage and animals—there are over a hundred and thirty of them—no two quite the same.

Work of a character very similar to that at Killaloe is to be found in two windows in the south wall of the eastern part of the church (still in use) at TOMGRANEY, also in Clare. This part of the church belongs to the twelfth century, but it is very doubtful if the windows are in their original positions or even belong to the church. In the same small church there are preserved, loose, a number of carved voussoirs from an arch of large span, and at



XV. CLONMACNOISE, OFFALY

The Nuns' Church, West Doorway and Chancel Arch

(see p 146)



XVI. TUAM, GALWAY
Capitals and Arch Rings in Chancel Arch
(see p 153)

Killaloe itself there are a few more obviously from the same arch. It is not unlikely that all belong to the chancel arch of the great church at Killaloe to which the elaborate doorway gave entry. Bishop Mant, who came to Killaloe in 1820 and was translated to Down and Connor three years later, certainly brought a High Cross from Kilfenora and set it up in the grounds of his palace at Clarisford, and he also repaired the small church of St. Lua on Friars' Island. He was interested in church architecture and it is conceivable that he had in mind some architectural scheme at Tomgraney and brought the arch stones there. The conjecture that the insertion of the two windows was also his work may be hazarded but both proof and record are lacking.

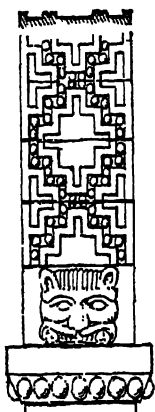
Quite the grandest of Irish chancel arches is that of the cathedral of TUAM, Galway (Pl. XVI). It is nearly sixteen feet in span—a greater dimension than was attained in any church in the native style—and has six orders of arch (including the broad hood-moulding), supported by five of pillars. The first jamb-order is square-edged; the three succeeding are bold three-quarter columns and the innermost a half-column. All are plain and rise from torus-moulded bases seated on double plinths. The capitals are deep, frieze-like blocks of square plan. Even in their much defaced condition—the archway was an outer doorway for centuries after the destruction of the nave—it is clear that the first four were decorated all over with interlacements and foliage patterns in low relief, very like the enrichments of the well-known High Cross of Tuam. The capitals of the half-columns are extraordinary in having human masks worked upon them, strangely flattened and in a technique not far removed from etching. Specially notable is the treatment of the hair of beards in interlocking S-curves recalling the same motive used in running scrolls at Killeslin and elsewhere. Over the northern capitals are abaci with just such scroll ornamentation besides other low-relief ornaments, but those of the south jamb are quite different; they are undecorated but boldly moulded. The section is a reversed ogee, not yet met with in this study but certainly indicative of a date for the whole work later than that usually accepted.

Four of the arch rings have chevron and roll ornaments recalling both the chancel arch of the Nuns' Church at Clonmacnoise and the Killaloe doorway, but more restrained and architectonic than the highly elaborated arches of the latter. The innermost arch has on its faces and broad soffit a motive unique in Ireland which Petrie,²⁸ thinking in heraldic terms, calls the nebule. Essentially it is made up of the chevron extended at the apex in an elongated loop rather of spoon-bill form. In the centre of the soffit and separating the two rows of this design is a narrow band of leaf ornament combined with beads, very like a window ornament in Kilcredaun church, Clare.²⁹

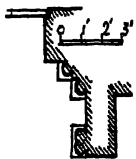
As to the date of this remarkable archway opinions have differed. To Petrie³⁰ it was a work of the early twelfth century; later students have assumed a mid-century date and this could be accepted on general grounds were it not for the appearance of the already-mentioned, strongly-moulded abacus in the south jamb. This is of a section more likely to be found in the "Transition" from Romanesque to Gothic and it, therefore, suggests a date not earlier than 1165 or, more acceptable, c. 1170.

In the east wall of the vaulted chancel to which the archway leads are three round-headed windows, widely splaying inwards. On the inner edges of two splays, the faces between them and the faces of the arches are finely-carved bands of ornament: zoomorphic interlace; square panels with figures, rosettes, etc., circles and lozenges. This work is clear and fresh and some of it may be restoration but nothing as to date, can safely be inferred from it except that it is late. The imposts are half-round in section and some pieces of original hood-moulding have a running ornament of small curved chevrons. Externally there are some remains of boss-decorated arch rings.

At FRESHFORD church, Kilkenny, there is a doorway—or rather porch (Pl. XVIII a and 88), since it is quite deep and projects boldly from the church wall—which is late in character but differs in several ways from the works of Phase 3 so far considered. It has a high-pitched gable rising from a level above that of the impost

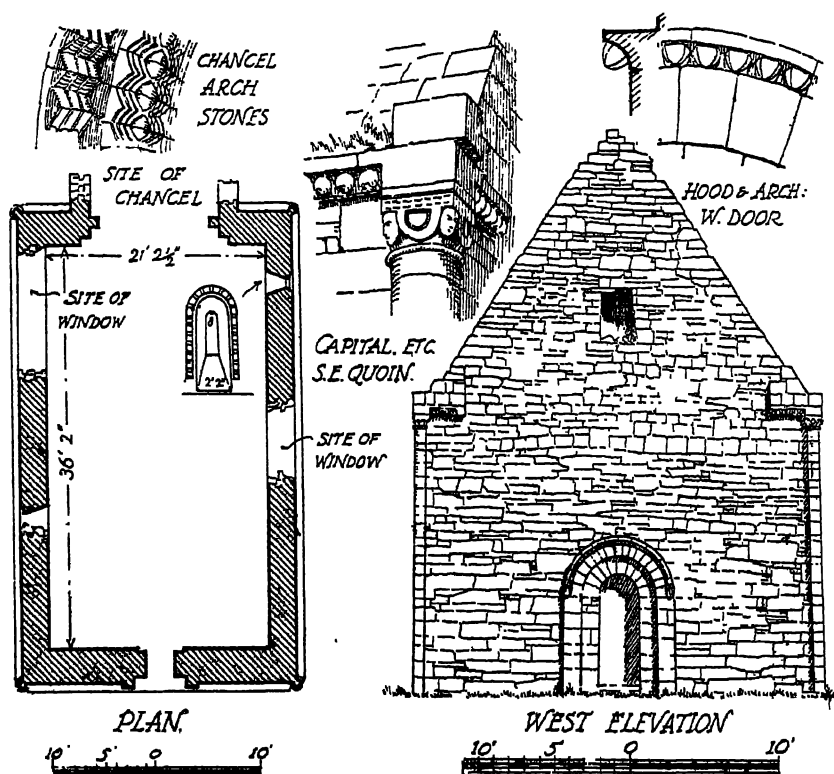


*Abacus & soffit of
outer arch.*



*Half plan of Porch.
FRESHFORD DOOR
(after Baldwin Brown)*

of the archway; in the normal Romanesque way and not of the tangent type, though equally steep in pitch. Shallow friezes, carved with figures, fill the gap above the imposts, recalling (in a very humble way) the splendid figure friezes of the Romanesque of southern France. The outer opening has but one order, the jambs formed of coupled three-quarter columns. They incline, are plain and have shallow capitals carved with human faces. A bold impost moulding, enriched with bosses, rests upon them and extends inwards for the full depth of the porch and to right and left across its whole outer face. The hood-moulding is of similar section and the single arch is decorated on its face and broad soffit with a double "battled-embattled" design: much worn carvings—grotesque

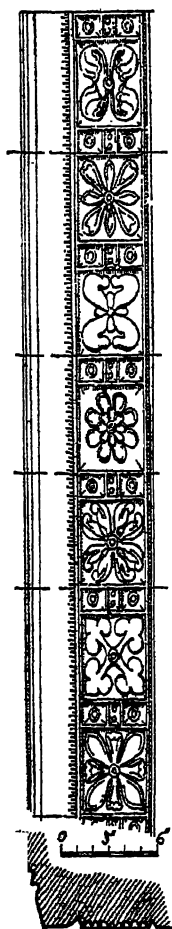


89. Ardfer, Kerry Templenahoe Plan etc
(After Hill)

masks, dragon-like, with tiny human faces protruding from the jaws—ornament the springings (88). Further in, two orders of chevroned arches are carried by engaged columns which have scalloped capitals. The door arch which succeeds has a face which is plain except for the long inscription which is incised upon it. The broad returns of its jambs have a shallow system of panels. In one of these is a carving of two figures. Few letters are lost from the remarkably clear inscription commemorating the builders and patrons of the work. It is regrettable that none of their names can be identified as those of individuals known to history.

The works of Phase 3 may be said to have reached their climax of elaboration in the Killaloe door and the Tuam arch but there still remain for consideration other examples which, stylistically, are of later date than those much-decorated relics. Indeed, the Irish style became more austere in its latest expressions.

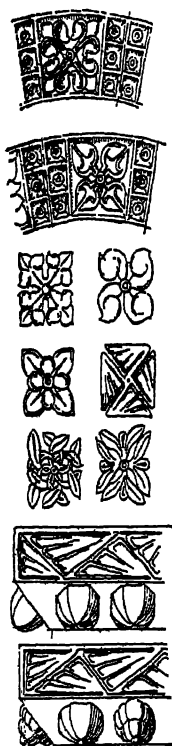
TEMPLE-NA-HOE, Ardfert, Kerry (89, 90, 91), one of the two small churches which lie close to the cathedral at Ardfert, Kerry, reminds one, at first sight, of the Kilmalkedar church. Its nave—the chancel has vanished—is somewhat larger but of the same proportions; its walls higher and its two gables of the same high pitch. Instead of antae Temple-na-hoe has a three-quarter column at each quoin. The capitals of these columns vary in design; one is scalloped, another has small human heads. A bold eaves-course, decorated with bosses and punctuated by corbels carved as animal heads, crowns the side-walls and returns inwards on each gable for a short distance. The west doorway is of two orders, square and quite undecorated, the first projecting outwards from the wall-face and being, in effect, a pilaster. Two animal head stops complete the hood-moulding, which has a hollow chamfer with conical bosses of hexagonal section. Very unlike the small arch at Kilmalkedar is the chancel arch. Originally it had three orders and was 11 feet in width but is now wider by reason of the disappearance of the innermost jambs and arch. The jambs are not inclined, but are square in plan and quite plain. Capping them is an impost carved with a narrow foliage pattern based on an



90
(After Hill)

angular fret (cf. Donaghmore and Clonfert) on the fascia, and bosses conical and bud-like on the chamfer. Of the two arches the first is of the familiar ribbon or point-out chevron, and the very much weathered second order has curved chevrons on both faces. This is a late development—fore-shadowing the Transition. Also late are the border ornaments of the one perfect window (91).

Built into the east wall of the small and plain late Gothic church at ANNAGHDOWN, Galway, is a remarkable window (Pl. XVIII b, 92, 93), executed in hard blue-grey limestone. Wider than most Irish windows it is round-headed and splays widely inwards where, on both the splays of the jambs and arch, it is carved with a chevron design. The chevrons meet on an arris moulding which is, in effect, an extremely elongated animal; its legs are at the base of the right-hand jamb, its strange head, devouring clusters of serpents, at the other extremity (92). The section of this moulding is significant for dating purposes; it is not an ordinary roll but has a sharp, square arris: the pointed bowtell characteristic of the early stages of the Transition from Romanesque to Gothic. In this far western locality the presence of this detail may indicate a date for this window as late as the end of the century, but hardly earlier than *c.* 1180. The narrow, lightly-moulded pilasters, with flat foliage caps, are also late but in every other respect the window is a truly Romanesque work: the spandrels of the chevrons on both jambs and arch—and on the bold hood-moulding—have borders of beads and are filled with low-relief decoration of stylized foliage patterns, flowers and palmettes in bewildering variety. No two of the 118 are quite similar in design and only a selection can be illustrated (93).



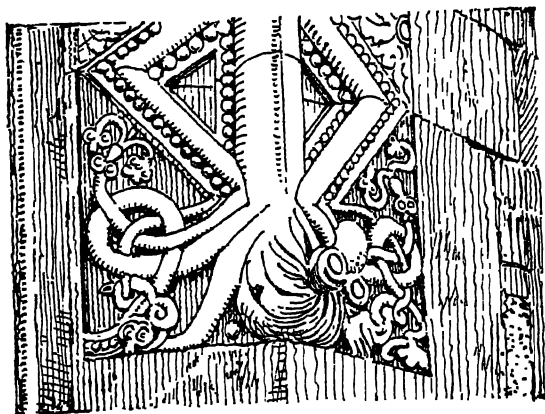
ORNAMENTS OF
SOUTH WINDOW,
AND IMPOST OF
CHANCEL ARCH

91

(After Hill)

Another remnant of the latest phase of the Irish style is the south doorway of the church at WHITE ISLAND, Lough Erne, Fermanagh, rebuilt with the original stones in 1929. It is in two orders. The jambs are engaged columns, boldly treated, and the much-weathered capitals show traces of interlaced ornament. Both the abaci and the hood-moulding are decorated with small bosses. By themselves all these features would serve to place the

door somewhere in the middle phase of the style, but it is otherwise with the mouldings of the round arches; these are broad rolls with a square arris—the pointed bowtell. A late eleventh century date has been assigned to this work³¹ but the occurrence of this moulding indicates a date about a full century later.



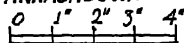
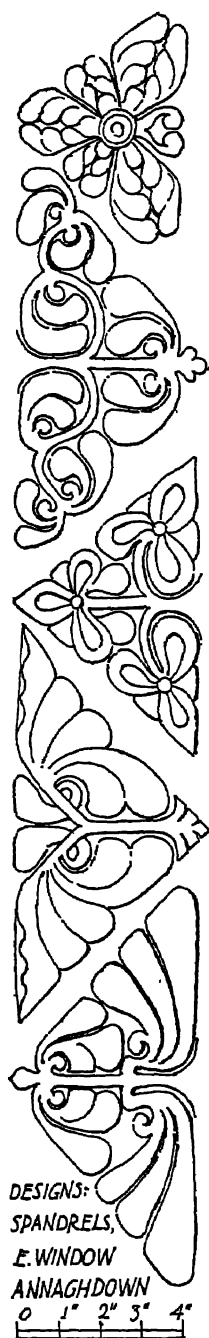
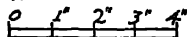
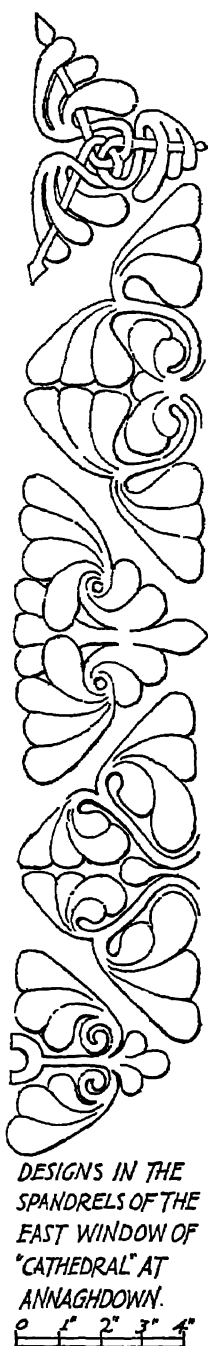
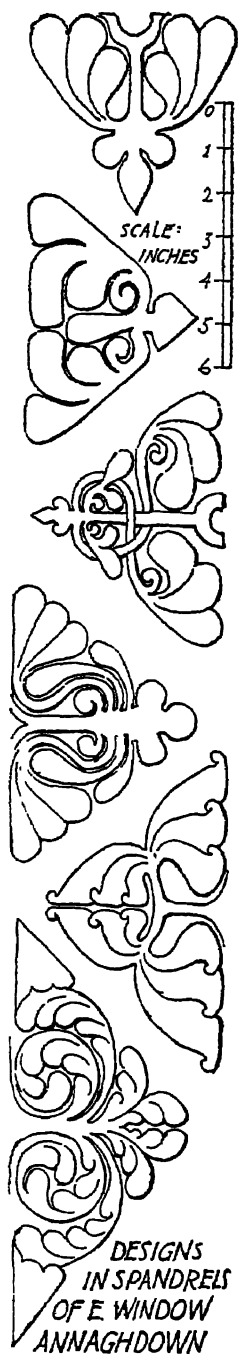
92. Annaghdown, Galway
S. Inner Jamb of East Window

8. SOME FRAGMENTS AND EXCEPTIONS

This section is devoted to examples which are either exceptions to the line of development adopted in the foregoing discussions of the phases of the Irish style, or are small and fragmentary—in some cases no more than detached fragments. Each has a place, none the less, chronologically if not always stylistically, in the developing style.

At FALLMORE, in the Mullet, Mayo, is the ruin of a small rude church dedicated to St. Dairbhile. Its west doorway, small and round-headed, has some much-weathered, interlaced ornament on a jamb-stone and incised lines bordering the arch within and without. By reason of its very simplicity this little church may be assigned to Phase 1.

One of the most curious surviving structures is the small building—not, apparently, a church—at Glendalough, Wicklow,



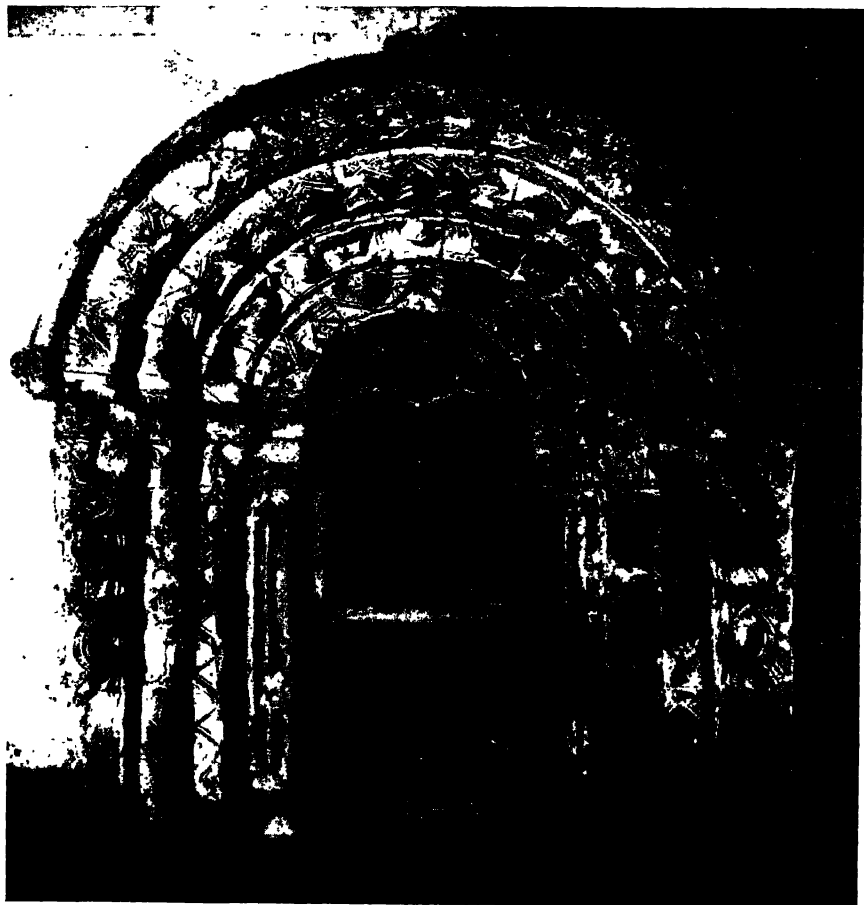


94. Glendalough, Wicklow
Lintel in the Priests' "House"

known as the Priests' House, which stands central in the ancient monastic burial ground. The lintel over its narrow south door is a gable-shaped stone (94) upon which is carved a seated, crowned figure attended on each side by other figures, one carrying a bell of the Irish type, the other a crozier. It is doubtful if this stone belongs to the building or is, indeed, a work of the full Romanesque period. An enigmatic feature of this little structure is the arched recess—restored but incomplete—in the outside of the east wall. Its jambs are splayed and have small engaged-columns with a vertical groove filled with beads or pellets of pyramidal form. The capitals are represented only by the lower part of that of the northern column. It shows the chin of a moustached face. Some voussiors of a chevron-decorated arch, splayed like the jambs, and with a pointed arris roll, remain. There are also pieces of a hood-moulding with V-flutings. All the carving is finely wrought in the local mica-schist: the stone used in St. Saviour's Priory. The building belongs to Phase 3 and can hardly be earlier than *c.* 1165 but is more probably at least a decade later. The piece of cornice enriched with large nail-heads and cat-mask (95) preserved in St. Kevin's Church, may belong to this building.



The same stone and technique appear in the fragments of a door-arch built into the south porch of the parish church at WICKLOW (96). It has one order of point-out chevrons and a second smaller but not unlike the inner order of the arch at St. Saviour's Priory, Glendalough. Engaged-columns with a spiral twist have also been built in and bear capitals very like bases set upside down



XVII. KILLALOE, CLARE
Doorway in Cathedral
(see p. 152)



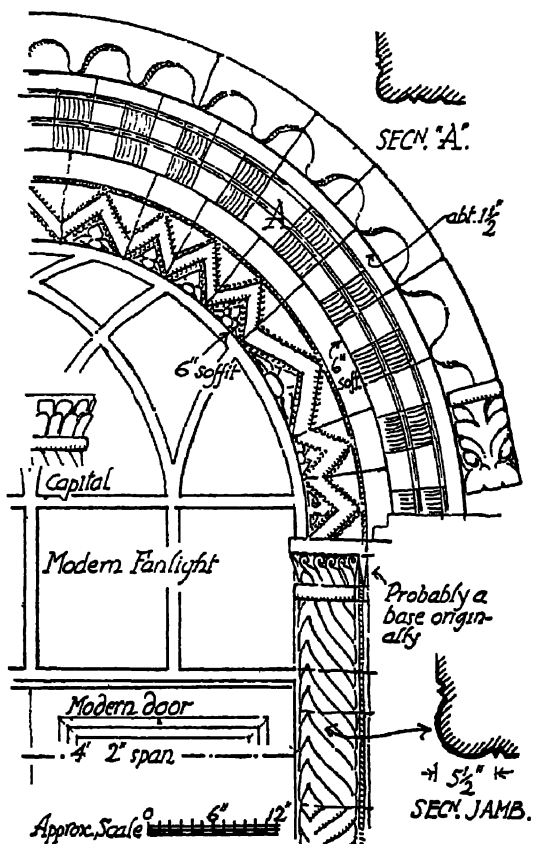
XVIII a. FRESHFORD, KILKENNY
West Porch of Church
(see p 154)



XVIII b. ANNAGHDOWN, GALWAY
Jamb of window in "Cathedral"
(see p 157)

as, indeed, they may be. The surface enrichment of the columns suggests a date somewhat later than that of the Glendalough priory but earlier than the Priests' House at the same place.

A small church at KILBUNNY, Waterford, has a rebuilt doorway—probably but one order of a larger original—with an arch of point-out chevrons, springing from imposts decorated with



96. Wicklow
Twelfth-century Doorway built into Parish Church

bosses and flanked by carvings, one of a horse-head. A human mask ornaments the top of one jamb. Human faces, set in lozenge-shaped frames, are built into the east wall of the ruined church in

the town of TUAM, Galway, round about the inner arches of the three windows of Transitional style. They are evidently from an earlier building of Romanesque style and date.

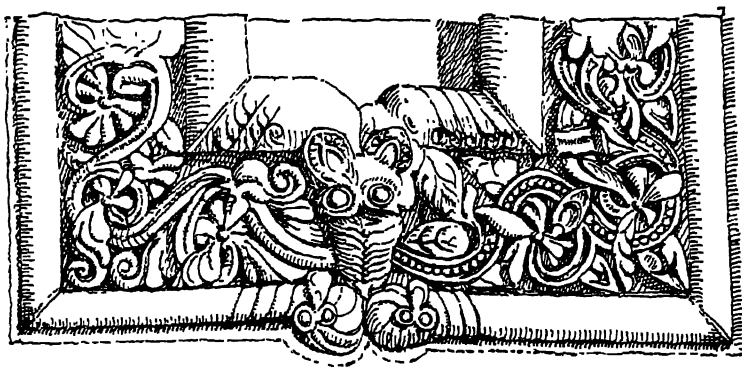
Unmoulded, point-out chevrons make up the two orders of arches in the archway erected in front of the modern church at CASTLEDERMOT, Kildare. This portal is of wide proportions but probably had another—inner—order, and was the doorway of a church now vanished. The same kind of chevrons, plain and unmoulded, is to be found in voussoirs preserved with other loose fragments at INCHCLERAUN, Longford. These arch stones seem to have come from the entrance to the monastic cashel on the island. The position of this entrance is still marked by some jambstones, in two orders, the outer decorated with an angle roll flanked by large beads, and the second having a double chevron band on both face and return, forming bold notchings on the arris. Despite the general simplicity of the arches this treatment of the arris is suggestive of a late rather than of an early date.

Chevrons folded over the arris of an arch—as at Monaincha—are also to be seen in the inner order of the doorway of the oratory at INNISFALLEN, Lough Leane, Killarney, Kerry, but the outer order is of a design found nowhere else in the country: the voussoirs are point-out chevrons but are treated in the same fashion across the soffit also.

At BALLYSDARE, Sligo, is a door arch made up of carved heads (very much like those in the outer arch at Inchagoill) sheltered by a plain chamfered hood-moulding.

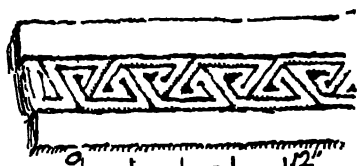
Mention has already been made to the influence of Scandinavian art (e.g., at Killeslin, Clonmacnoise, Killaloe and Kilmore) and it remains to draw attention to an isolated fragment in which this influence is very apparent: a window sill at RATH or RATH BLATHMAIC Church, Clare (97). It is a single stone, the lowest of an architraved opening, and is richly carved. Panels of scroll and animal ornament are bounded by inner and outer rolls, the former terminating in a dragonesque head in the centre and the latter in

serpent heads almost identical with that of the elongated beast at Annaghdown, Galway.



97. Rath, Clare Twelfth-century Sill
(After Westropp and Henry)

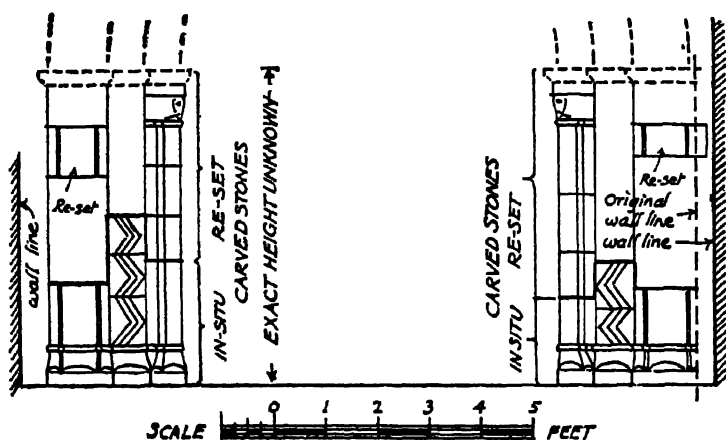
The County Wexford contains little architecture of the period. CLONE church and the window from it used in St. Peter's Church at Ferns, have already been noted. An impost moulding, decorated on the chamfer with an angular fret, survives at ADAMSTOWN, Wexford (98) and indicates the existence there, at one time, of a Romanesque church. The only other example known in the county is the ruin of the church of the Augustinian monastery founded at Ferns by Dermot McMurrough. The monastery is said to have been burnt in 1154 and rebuilt later. There remain only part of the west wall—with a circular round tower-like belfry set on a square base—most of the north wall of the nave and chancel and north-eastern annexe of several storeys. No decorated work survives but the



ADAMSTOWN: PART OF IMPOST.

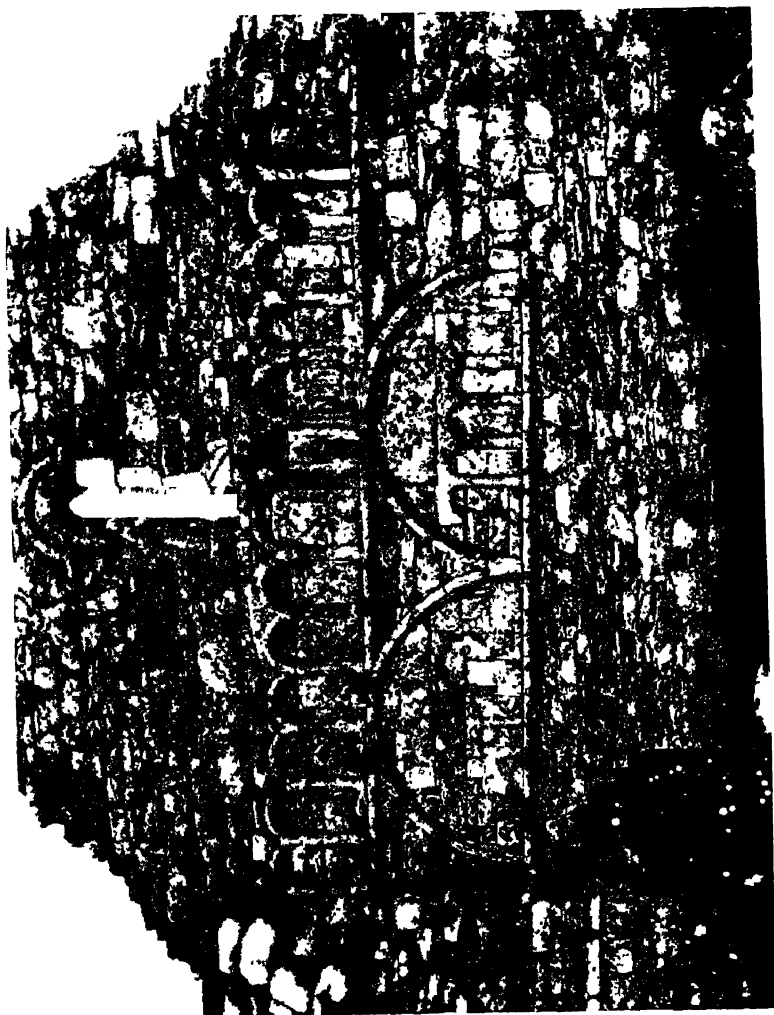
remains of the barrel vaulted chancel retain parts of three broad, plain transverse ribs, and in its north wall is a round-headed window flanked by lower niches of the same form. The building certainly looks older than the recorded burning of 1154.

Figure sculpture is of rare occurrence in the buildings of the period. Mention has already been made of the small frieze and the figures in a panel within the porch at Freshford. Another of its rare appearances is in the outer face of the west wall of the cathedral at ARDMORE, Waterford. Here is decoration (Pl. XIX) spread over almost the whole width of the wall: a blank arcade now of thirteen small, shallow, round-headed niches, above two larger half-circle lunettes or bows. These enclose sub-arcades; three in one, five in the other. At least nine of the upper row of niches contain figure sculpture, which also fills the lower sub-arcade and the space above them in the southern lunette. All the carvings are much weathered, many are mere shadows, but the following subjects are identifiable: The Fall (Adam, Eve, the Tree and the Serpent), the Judgement of Solomon, the Virgin and Child (with an



99. Kiltel, Kildare Jambs of Chancel Arch in Church
(Leash: J.R.S.A.I.)





XIX. ARDMORE, WATERFORD
West Gable of Cathedral
(see p 164)



XX. KILTEEL CHURCH, KILDARE

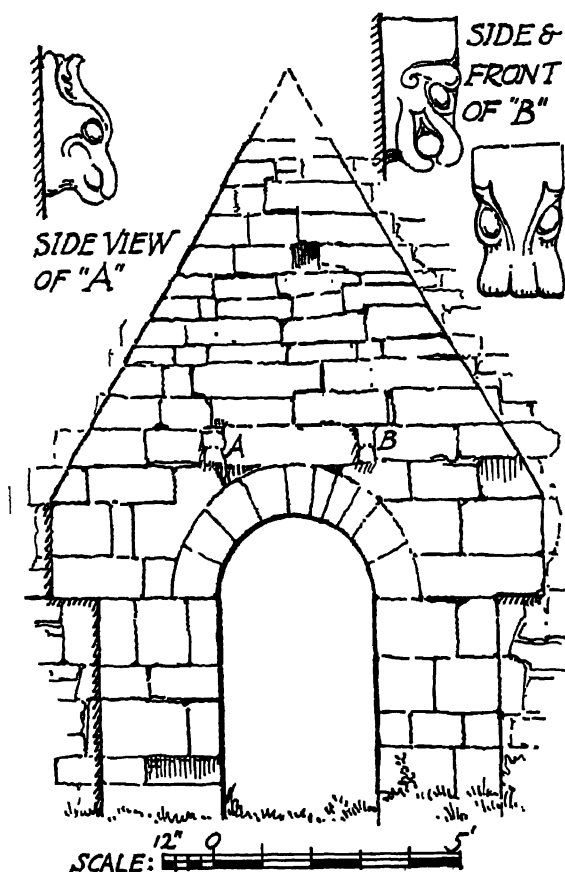
Fragments from Chancel Archway

(see p. 164)

ox near by), the Magi, Joseph. The figures and subjects in the upper niches have not been identified with certainty. That this work belongs to the ending phase of the style is made clear by the window over the arcading and obviously coeval with the sculptures. It is round-headed and splays widely inwards where it had detached shafts with scalloped capitals, chamfered impost and an arch with Transitional mouldings. Another window in the side-wall of the nave, without shafts, has an arch moulding of the same section.

About twenty years ago a number of carved stones were extracted from the walls of ruinous farm buildings at KILTEEL castle, Kildare (Pl. XX and 99). A search in the old church of Killeel led to the discovery, in situ, of the lower parts of the jambs of a Romanesque chancel arch in three orders to which the stones and capitals found clearly belonged³². Some of the former, carved very much in the style of the High Crosses—including Samson and the Lion, Adam and Eve—were units in the first jamb order: others, broader and bolder, with larger figures, belong to the third order. Among the carvings of this group are two wrestling figures (Jacob's Dream?), a bishop with a crozier of early form, seated musicians, an acrobat, as well as others not identified. The most remarkable was found in position: a bearded David carrying the head of Goliath—a mask of quite Assyrian aspect—upon a spear. The second jamb has a roll flanked by bold chevrons and all the orders have angle rolls with narrow fillets. The frieze-form capitals found all have fine human masks at the angles, bearded and moustached and have very close and intricate interlaced ornament of strands of hair interpenetrated by zoomorphs. The upper part of each capital is a narrow fascia ornamented with circular rosettes separated by leaf motives, the whole of classical type and not found elsewhere in Ireland. The interlaced ornament is remarkable for the very large number of free ends—twice as many as in the somewhat similar capitals at Killeslin—suggesting rather a late than an early date for the work: the end of Phase 2 or the beginning of Phase 3. In one respect the Killeel example stands alone: it is the only Irish style chancel arch in which figure carving appears.

On CHURCH ISLAND, Louth Currane, Kerry, are the remains of a church with nave and chancel. Its west doorway, incomplete, though considerably restored, has four orders, of which the innermost is undecorated and retains its plain, round arch. The first jamb order projects slightly westwards and has a plain three-quarter column, as also has the second, but the column of the third order is superficially carved in twist form with lines of beading. As usual, the much-weathered capitals and bases have slight projection and the latter are more than usually like capitals reversed. Two small round-headed windows remain in the church;



100. Ballyhay, Cork S. Doorway of Church

one in the east wall of the chancel, the other in the south side of the nave. A date in the early stages of Phase 2 seems most appropriate for this work.

Unusually sited in a south wall is the doorway of the church at BALLYHAY, near Charleville, Cork (100). It is without decoration to jamb or arch but is given importance by its surround: a frontal of well-cut sandstone masonry projecting forward but 2 inches from the church wall, shouldered to right and left at the level of the arch's springing and rising in a steep-pitched gable to the wall-top. The only ornamental features are two beast heads set over the arch. On the inner side the arch is provided with a hood-moulding over 8 inches wide and of as much projection: a curious and unnecessary provision in such a position. The lack of decoration suggests an early date but the width of the opening (3 feet 3 inches) is unusual for early work. In both form and position this portal is exceptional and more probably late than early.

In the west wall of the cathedral at Clonmacnoise is a much-restored, perhaps twice re-built, doorway in four orders of square-edged jambs. When Petrie first saw and sketched this doorway early in the last century three of these jambs, on the south side, were crowned by capitals of which only two now remain. Of these, that of the innermost order (95) originally belonged to a half-round pillar. It is of unusual form and delicately wrought with rounded flutings which terminate in a three-lobed leaf beneath ogee curves. While the fineness of the carving suggests an early date, the section of the hollowed impost moulding or abacus, now lost, which Petrie saw and illustrated,³³ together with the leaf carving of the second capital—also missing now—suggests a date on the verge of the Transition to Gothic: the last decades of the twelfth century.

1. Zarnecki: *Later English Romanesque Sculpture* Tiranti, London, 1953) p. 9.

2. Annals of Innisfallen, 1282, record the destruction by wind of the church founded 124 years before.

3. Westropp: "Churches of Co. Clare," *P.R.I.A.*, 3rd Ser., Vol. VI, No. 1 (1900), p. 130.

4. Champneys: *Eccles. Archr. of Ireland*, pp. 105-6.

5. Clapham: *Archl. Journal*, Memorial, Vol. CVI, Supplement, p. 21.

6. Henry: *La Sculpture Irlandaise*, Paris (1933), p. 75.
7. de Vogüé: *Syrie Centrale*.
8. Clapham: *Romanesque Architecture in Western Europe*, Oxford (1936), p. 148.
9. Henry: *Irish Art*, London (1940), pp. 181-2.
10. Champneys: *Ecc. Archv. of Ireland*, London (1910), p. 101.
11. Henry: *La Sculpture Irlandaise*, p. 173, and *Irish Art*, p. 96.
12. Clapham: Review of *La Sculpture Irlandaise* in *Antiquaries Journal*, October, 1933. *Romanesque Architecture in Western Europe*, Oxford (1936), p. 138.
13. Clapham: *English Romanesque Architecture (I) Before the Conquest*, Oxford (1930), p. 26.
14. Viollet-le-Duc: *Dictionnaire Raisonné de l'Architecture Française*.
15. Macalister: *Corpus Inscriptionem Insularum Celticarum*, Irish Mss. Comm., vol. ii, pp. 26-8.
16. Picton: *Early German Art*, London, 1939, p. 60.
17. McNeill, *J.R.S.A.I.*, Vol. 42, p. 145.
18. Hill: *Monograph on Kilmalkedar Church, Kerry, Cork* (1870).
19. Hill: *Monograph on Ardferit Cathedral, Kerry, Cork* (1870).
20. Baldwin Brown, *The Builder*, November 6, 1897, p. 364.
21. Clapham: *Rom. Archv. in England*, II, p. 122. Fig. 41, 3.
22. Lowry-Corry, *J.R.S.A.I.*, Vol. 66 (1936), pp. 270-84.
23. McNeill and Leask, *J.R.S.A.I.*, Vol. 50, pp. 19-35.
24. Brash: *Ecclesiastical Architecture of Ireland*, Dublin (1875), pp. 44-5.
25. Crawford: *J.R.S.A.I.*, Vol. 42, p. 2 ff.
26. Macalister, "Clonmacnoise," *R.S.A.I.*, Spec. Vol. (1909), pp. 145-150.
27. Westropp, *P.R.I.A.*, 3rd Ser., Vol. VI, No. 1, p. 158.
28. Petrie, *ibid.*, pp. 314 *et seq.*
29. Westropp, *ibid.*, p. 167 and pl. XI, fig. 6.
30. Petrie, *ibid.*, pp. 314 *et seq.*
31. McKenna and Lowry-Corry, *J.R.S.A.I.*, Vol. 60, p. 29.
32. Leask, *J.R.S.A.I.*, Vol. 65, pp. 1-8.
33. Petrie, *ibid.*, p. 275.

GLOSSARY

- Abacus** (Pl. Abaci). The horizontal member above the capital of a pillar or column; used in the text, for the sake of brevity, in preference to the longer—but more correct—term *Impost moulding* (q.v.).
- Anthemion**. The stylized Greek honeysuckle motive (69 right-hand).
- Apse**. A semicircular projection at the end of a church.
- Architrave**. A plain or moulded border to an opening (31, 35).
- Archivolt**. A complete arch ring or group of arch rings (as in 55).
- Arris**. A sharp external angle or edge—usually square, or so slightly rounded as not to merit the name of moulding.
- Bargeboard**. Verge board or gable rafter finishing the outside of a gable below the verge or edge of the roof covering (29).
- " Battled-Embattled."** (Heraldry). A step or embattled pattern with more than one successive step (85, 88).
- Bead**. A narrow, rounded moulding often flanked by a quirk (q.v.).
- Billet**. An ornament in Norman architecture resembling short logs of wood or short rolls, usually equally spaced. It may be single or double. Rare in Irish work.
- Bowtell**. A bold roll moulding, about a three-quarter circle in section. When modified so as to be square-edged at the arris it is a pointed bowtell. (XVIIIb). Its occurrence is a symptom of the Transition from the Romanesque to the Gothic style.
- Casement**. A recess in a wall-surface round about a window opening (58).
- Chamfer**. The splayed surface obtained by cutting off a square edge.
- Colonette**. A narrow pillar or pillar-like moulding (45, 55 outer and inner jambs).
- Cushion Capital**. A square, block capital with the lower edges rounded off.
- Dent-de-scie** (Fr.). A narrow, zig-zag notching of a stringcourse or similar feature.
- Dentil**. A decorative motive like square teeth (e.g., hood-moulding in 55).
- Egg-and-dart**. A feature in classical architecture—in Roman work usually of quarter-circle section—carved with egg-like forms separated by small arrows, darts or leaf motives.
- Embattled**. Simple step pattern design. See also the more complex " Battled-embattled ").
- Fascia**. Flat vertical face or band.
- Fillet**. A narrow moulding, often of V-section in Irish work.
- Groin**. The line of intersection—an angular curve—of two vault surfaces at an angle to one another.
- Groin Rib**. A stone rib, usually moulded, supporting or on the line of a groin.
- Hood-moulding** (Also drip-moulding or drip-stone). A projecting member over an arch or lintel (examples are in 55, 61, 70, 73).
- Impost**. The plane in which an arch rests upon a pillar or pier.
- Impost Moulding**. A horizontal member marking an impost, particularly that of a jamb composed of a series of pillars. In effect a series of abaci (q.v.) joined together (as in 55).
- Lozenge**. A diamond-shaped panel, like two chevrons conjoined. (See soffit of inner arch in 56).
- Order**. One of a series of the jambs and concentric arches of an opening adjacent to and stepping back from each other.

- Palmette.** A decorative motive based on a palm leaf. With the anthemion (q.v.) it is the basis of a stock decorative feature, particularly in spandrels (69, left hand).
- Patera.** A small ornament, dish- or plate-like, usually round but sometimes of other shapes (outer ring in 74 and 82).
- Pilaster.** A column or pillar of rectangular plan partly built into and partly projecting from a wall.
- Plinth.** Projecting member below the base of a column or at the foot of a wall.
- Purlin.** A roof timber at right angles to the rafters (i.e., running lengthwise of the building) as a support to them. It is uncertain whether it was ever employed in early Irish buildings.
- Quatrefoil.** A four-lobed opening or ornament of four segments of circles—like an expanding flower (84).
- Quirk.** A narrow hollow flanking a bead moulding or the like.
- Quoin.** The external angle of a building.
- Rebate.** A cutting back in stone or wood, generally right-angled.
- Reredos.** An architecturally treated wall or screen at the back of an altar.
- Respond.** A half column, pier or pilaster which projects to carry an arch, particularly one such at the termination of an arcade (as in 67 in the angle).
- Sawtooth.** See *Dent-de-scie*.
- Scalloped capital** (63).
- Severy.** A compartment of a vault between any two ribs.
- Shingles.** Thin, split timbers used as a roof covering, etc., in place of slabs, slates or tiles.
- Skewback.** A stone with a sloped upper surface forming a base for an arch. More loosely, the lowest voussoir of an arch.
- Soffit.** The under surface of a lintel, of a projection or of an arch. In the last-named connexion it is used in the text in preference to the correct, specific term, *intrados*.
- Soffit Rib.** An arch rib, plain, moulded or carved, beneath and—as it were—supporting a soffit.
- Spall.** Small stone or splinter of stone packed into a masonry joint.
- Spandrel.** Triangular compartment or space in chevron decoration or between the curve (*extrados*) of an arch and members bordering it (56-7, 77 and many others).
- Springing.** The starting point of the curve of an arch.
- Torus.** A moulding of bold, round section in or at the base of a pillar.
- "Urnes Style."** Scandinavian decorative style notable for decoration composed of inter-twined beasts. Named after the type site: Urnes Church, in Norway, an eleventh-century structure.
- Verge or Gable Rafter.** See *Bargeboard*.
- Voussoir.** Any one stone in an arch.
- Zoosomorph.** A stylized animal form much used in interlaced ornament.

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Numerals in heavy type indicate the pages in which will be found the more important and detailed information about individual buildings, etc.; more general and cross references are in ordinary type. Italic numerals refer to the drawings in the text and Roman type to the Plates.

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